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# AMONG THE IDOLMAKERS

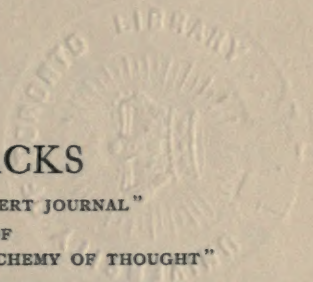
BY

L. P. JACKS

EDITOR OF "THE HIBBERT JOURNAL"

AUTHOR OF

"MAD SHEPHERDS" "THE ALCHEMY OF THOUGHT"



LONDON

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE

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# AMONG THE IDOL- MAKERS

## I. THE CASTAWAY

THE person to whose communicative disposition I am indebted for the narratives in this volume has given me the following account of himself, and I here present it to the reader that we may all know the kind of man with whom we have to deal. I will not vouch for the literal accuracy of this autobiographical piece; for I know that my friend has an unconventional, nay, a capricious, standard of truth. Many a time, indeed, as I listened to his stories I have caught him lying outright, and roundly rebuked him to his face. But no amendment followed; nay, he lied more deeply the next time we met. Once I threatened to

publish his stories under the general title of "Lies." "Do so," said he, "but know that the title itself will be a Lie; for some of the stories are true." Then he began to talk abstrusely—for my friend is a sort of philosopher—about Lies reproducing themselves in an infinite series which, when summed according to a certain calculus, becomes a Truth; and before I half understood what he was saying he reeled off the story of Rodright, which fills the Second Chapter of this book.

"Well," said I, "if these things are to be published your own portrait must stand as the frontispiece. Paint it yourself; and mind you do full justice to the expression in the eyes. Then the Public will be on its guard."

"An excellent proposition," said he, "which shows, incidentally, that you have now caught the secret of my calculus;" and without more ado he borrowed my fountain pen and wrote the following piece:—

"The critical moment of my history may be assigned to a certain date in March 1868, when my Father, according to an entry

in his Journal, bought me a copy of *Robinson Crusoe* for four-and-six.

“Little did my Father dream what he was doing. As he walked home that night my Destiny was in his pocket.

“A book absorbed by an imaginative child can give a lifelong climate to the soul, lending its colours to the experience of the coming years, tempering the quality of moods, laying all values under debt to its influence. The atmosphere of the author’s mind, which critics may never discover, is the first element the child appropriates, becoming thereby a visionary on his own account. In reading the letter he catches the spirit rather than the meaning, the sense rather than the idea ; he pierces to the secret springs of imagery ; he sees, hears, touches, tastes ; and so, following the innermost impulse of the written word, his own imagination becomes creative, and a new world is woven out of the living tissue of his sympathies. The book may sow no seed, neither of wheat nor of tares ; but air and weather are created for Sowings that are to come ; broad limits drawn within which the spirit may wander and beyond which it cannot pass ; the region assigned which is to be the

nursery of dreams, and the firmament stored with visions waiting to be born—Delectable Mountains hung in air, and far-seen Islands that shine like jewels in the circumambient waste.

“Had the eye of my Father chanced upon some other book, all would have been different. Had he bought me the *Fairchild Family*, or *Sandford and Merton*, or Miss Edgeworth’s *Tales*, or *Tom Brown*, then the lady who is now my wife would have belonged to another; my present children would not have been born, my strange life would not have been lived; and these lines would not have been written. If you find me a bore, a nuisance, or a liar—remember my Father’s act.

“*Robinson Crusoe* was the first book I read; nor have I ever read another with faith so complete, with imagination so on fire. The sources of thought were tapped; the waters of fancy were unsealed, and the channel cut in which they are doomed to flow until they are lost for ever in the sea. Like a stone dropped into the mouth of a geyser, the reading of that book let loose the floods that boil around the central fires; and a way was made for spirits that haunt



the secret springs of life to come and go from that day to this.

“No philosopher has ever had a clearer conception of the true end of man than I had at the age of twelve. All forms of self-realisation were false save one; and that was, to get oneself cast away, by hook or by crook, upon a Desolate Island. Nothing else would satisfy. Let others go to Heaven if they would; let others be good, or great; but let me be cast on some lonely palm-strewn shore in the uttermost parts of the earth. It was the foolish ship that came to port; it was the wise ship that was wrecked. Not for all the kingdoms of this world would I have exchanged my keg of powder, my cap of goatskin, my fortification, and my raft.

“Fundamentally I have never changed that creed. All has been of a piece; there has been no breach in my continuity; the child was father of the man, and my old madness, if madness it was, is with me yet. Before I was twelve years old my fate was sealed; and the gods have kept their bond. It was written that I should explore no Great Continents nor lift up a voice in any City; that the call should come from afar; that

I should shun the mainlands where men grow fat and live at ease; that I should stand out into great waters, follow the albatross in her lonely flight, and dwell on the sounding rocks where she makes her nest. O ye Universal Histories and Views of the World, O ye Perfect Satisfactions and Summum Bonums ready-made, what have I to do with you? A pin-point of time in the wide wastes of eternity, whereon some god had flung me, was all the dwelling-place I ever had. Of broad cities paved with gold I have had no vision; yet have I seen and handled many a shining grain washed down by the River of Life. Good in its Totality I have not known; but hands unseen, held out to save me, have drawn the spent swimmer from the billows of death. Standpoint for viewing the universe has never been mine; but often, when sinking in deep waters, I have felt a sudden standpoint beneath my feet. With Men in the Mass I have had no traffic. None but lonely souls have I ever met; all were exceptions; Desolate Islands in Time; and with no chart to guide me I have sailed among them, sounding as I went.

“Wordsworth speaks of a far-off day

when the cataract haunted him like a passion. My haunting passion was the Island. I ransacked libraries for the literature of Islands, and the more desolate they were the better I was pleased. I pored over great maps till Polynesia and Melanesia were more familiar than the geography of the county in which I lived. I found that men who had written of Utopia and other impossible things were as mad as I was about Islands, and I loved them all and read their books over and over again. I knew the Hebrides by heart, I was at home in the archipelagos of the Pacific, I could thread my way among the smallest groups of the Indies, East and West, and a navigator of the Cyclades might almost have used me for a pilot. Columbus, Magellan, Drake, Dampier, Anson, Cook—these were the names of my familiar spirits; and had I not sailed with Odysseus of many devices over leagues and leagues of the unharvested sea?

“It was always the little islands I loved the best, and if they were not only small but very remote, like St. Kilda, Kerguelen, or Juan Fernandez, so that a mariner shipwrecked on their shores might have reasonable chance of being unrescued for years, I rejoiced like

the man who discovered a treasure hid in a field. Australia interested me not the least—it was too big. No castaway of twelve years could be expected to manage such a place. The Channel Islands were contemptible; they were too near. They suggested the odious possibility of being rescued by a steamer! But the Isles of Aru, Tinian and Tidore, the Dampier Group, the Solomons, the Celebes—these were the places where a castaway of merit might make his mark.

“ I well remember going to the Lending Library of my native town for the first time. I told the attendant that I wanted a book about Islands. After some consultation with his superior officer, not unattended by mockery and mean laughter, a book was produced and handed to me. It was covered in brown paper; and I did not see the name obscurely written on the back. I ran home in a mingled turmoil of shame and triumph, keeping the title a secret from myself until I could find a place where no derisive spectators could overlook my ecstasy. Retiring as usual to the coppice on the hill, I sat down with a beating heart and opened the volume. It was a treatise on the Climate and Geo-

graphy of the British Isles ! How I loathed and hated those rascally librarians ! To this day they remain the representatives to me of all that is vile in man, and whenever my mind has to figure some type of human baseness worse than all the rest, those two detestable faces, sniggering behind the counter, hang in air before me, or steal like ugly shadows over the written page. They had committed an unforgivable sin ; they had cut me to the quick ; they had caused me to stumble ; and I did not doubt, and have never doubted, that it would have been better for those men if they had been cast into the uttermost depths of the sea with millstones hanged about their necks.

“ My big Atlas was of German origin, and the page was strewn with dark words, and there were darker legends printed in small type at the foot. At first I stood bewildered, like Dante gazing at the inscription over the Gates of Hell. But I was through that difficulty in a trice, and even now (let the boast be forgiven) I will match my knowledge of German topographical terms with that of any man in England. I began the study of German in the Anson Archipelago

and the first German words I learnt to translate were 'unbewohnte Inseln.' Next to the Anson Group lay a peppered area bearing the legend 'Magelhaes Archipel,' the black dots delightfully interspersed with notes of interrogation, and rich in possibilities of illustrious shipwreck. Across this area lay the words, *zum gr ssten Theil unbewohnt*. Thus I was led to see that if the Anson Archipel defeated me I should still have the Magelhaes Archipel to fall back upon, for was it not, after the manner of the curate's egg, 'unbewohnt' in parts? And considerable parts too, for did not the legend say 'zum grössten Theil'? Magic words, still exercising their spell, though, alas! in other fields. There is in my library a row of book-shelves laden with German Metaphysics. It is 'Der Deutsche Archipel,' *zum grössten Theil unbewohnt*. Every one of those books has its tale of shipwreck; are not their shores strewn with wreckage, even as Hegel said? Some of them are the very Islands where for long years I have been dolorously cast away.

"Once my Father, in response to urgent entreaty, took me to the Isle of Man. Out in the Irish Channel we met a hurricane;

the wretched boat broke one of its paddles, and we were eighteen hours in making the Island. My Father, with that touch of exaggeration which characterised him, used to say that the only persons on board who were not desperately sea-sick were the Captain and myself. I can see and hear my Father now as he stood on the rocking deck with one arm encircling the mast, praising me for the steadiness of my sea legs, and telling me, what I knew not till then, that I came of a race of sailors and did credit to my breed. He told me also another thing that surprised me, namely, that my great-grandfather, whom I dimly remembered as the main pillar of an Ebenezer Chapel, and whose portrait hung in an odour of sanctity over the place where my Father read family prayers, had been a desperate sea-ruffian in his youth, and had sunk many ships and presumably cut several throats. I asked, had my great-grandfather ever been shipwrecked? The answer was, yes; but my spirits fell when I learnt that the scene of the shipwreck was no Island, but the monstrous mainland of South America. My great-grandfather, I thought, might have done better than that: and I, for my

part, resolved to do better when my own turn came.

“As my Father talked, light began to fall on many things that had puzzled me. In particular, I understood that ever-recurrent dream of mine, which still returns in unvaried detail whenever there is fever in my blood—the dream of two ships with yard-arms interlocked, bright sunlight and black smoke above, confusion and dead men around, and a crimson stream coursing down my left forearm and trickling from all five fingers on to the deck.

“What with the storm, my Father’s stories, and the possibility of shipwreck on the spot, I had a glorious day, probably the most glorious of all my life. True, the Isle of Man was no favourite of mine, but to be cast away on the Isle of Man was better than not to be cast away at all. And then my Father’s presence created a difficulty. It interfered with my praying to Heaven, as I wanted to do, that the ship might presently strike, and that all souls might be lost except myself. However, I managed to arrange the matter. I prayed that my Father might be provided with a piece of wreckage, and that he might be



promptly picked up by a passing vessel and taken back to Liverpool none the worse for his wetting. I concluded with asking a blessing on my Mother, and then confident in the answer to prayer, which I had repeatedly proved at school—when I had recently got 70 not-out in a cricket match and beaten an odious good boy in the Greek Irregular Verbs, both in direct answer to prayer—confident, I say, that my petitions were heard, I braced myself to face the worst.

“And the worst came, but in a place and form that I did not expect nor relish. It came in a stuffy room of the Douglas Hotel, where all night long I lay tossing in fever, stunned with the din of cannon, choked with the reek of gunpowder, and piteously calling to my poor Father to staunch the blood that was flowing from my left forearm, for the smell of it, I said, was making me sick. Next morning the Doctor came—I see him now—and opening the top button of my little shirt he gazed for a moment and said one word—‘measles.’

“The long hours of the sleepless nights, of which I had many, were passed in planning adventures on Desolate Islands. My imagina-

tion ran riot, and brought me, I doubt not, perilously near insanity. I painted my islands in colours such as never were on sea or land; I stored them with buried treasures; I caused them to be inhabited by every conceivable sort of wild beast; I invaded them with innumerable tribes of savages, and I fought these poor barbarians and slaughtered them at will. I took care that the vessel in which I was wrecked should always have in its hold not only barrels of gunpowder and kegs of sugar, but grand pianos, for I was excessively fond of music, and velocipedes, just invented, one of which had been promised me as a birthday gift. Anachronisms troubled me not a whit. How I got the grand piano ashore would be a long story to tell. It was a vast undertaking, and kept my wits at work for weeks, and prolonged to morning many a sleepless night. Never since the invention of tools was such an elaborate mechanism devised as that by which, single-handed, I transported the grand piano from the wreck to my 'fortification.' I have invented many impossible things in my time, but none which does me so much credit as that.

“Again there was always a mitrailleuse

on board, a weapon of which I had read much during the Franco-German war. This engine had fascinated my curiosity, and by means of a diagram in some illustrated paper I had mastered its construction and method of working. Does any one in these days require a grey-haired man to work a mitrailleuse? I offer myself for the post. What did I want it for? Well, the savages were wont to visit my Island in big battalions, and a battery of flint-lock muskets would never have thinned them down to the point which my dreams of victory required. So a mitrailleuse had to be provided, and I can tell you that the man behind the mitrailleuse knew his work; nor has he forgotten it. How I peppered those savages! There was a picture in my mind (where did I get it?) of a vast sunlit bay, visually present, with every little islet and indentation, every cliff and tree distinctly marked. At critical moments it was black with the war canoes of my foes. I can see one of them at this very moment, creeping out from behind a wooded isle where the enemy has gathered his forces for the attack. Out it comes into the open; the paddles strike the water all together; the warriors

raise a hoarse battle-song (I can hear their voices now); they come on—death and destruction, down they go! A second follows, and this one I catch just as it emerges from the shelter of the Isle. O foolish savages, what god has bewitched you thus to send out your forces in numbers exactly equal to the slaying powers of my mitrailleuse? A third time you repeat your error and now you are lost. Panic seizes you; you turn your war canoes to the open sea; you scatter and fly! And I, sitting up in my little bed, am screaming with excitement, and there is my Father with a lighted candle, and behind him my Mother, anxious and terrified, with a medicine glass in her hand, and a little blue packet of powder, which tastes, when she puts it to my lips, like the mouthpiece of my tin pea-shooter, and is, I think, bromide of potassium. O my Mother, you come no more when I raise my cries in the night! Where are you, after these long years?

“It was a curious and perhaps unwholesome feature of these imaginings that I pictured myself as absolutely alone. Not for worlds would I have permitted another human being to share my experience. Ever

must I be the first 'that burst into that silent sea.' What, pray, are other people? They are beings who interfere, and I was not going to be interfered with on my Island. I loved my Mother and my Father, and I loved them too much to wish them with me there. No, but they would hear about it all when I came home. That must satisfy them, as it ought to satisfy all reasonable 'other people.' These were my Ethics.

"And here I must enter a confession; but it shall not be long. I now know that the mental disease from which I suffered in those days was a suppressed type of megalomania. What I was after was glory. Behind all my burstings into silent seas I ever placed the certainty that when the hour was ripe I should burst out of them again and astonish the world with the recital of my mighty deeds. The solitude of my Desolate Island was, after all, a relative thing; the island floated in a circumambient ocean, it was masked by populous continents from which I had come and to which I should surely return. All hung on the coming back. And thus it came to pass that the framing of each adventure was unconsciously

controlled by the needs of the story which I should one day have to tell. So my sanity was preserved. Men condemned to solitude go mad; and minds that dwell in the solitudes of imagination are in the same danger; but the solitude is harmless enough when the subject conceives himself as acting the solitary soul under the eyes of an admiring world. Let him but be sure that he will come back, and he is safe. Well, I was sure that I should come back; indeed, it was with the object of coming back that I went away. And, behold, here I am.

“In after years there came a time when I thought the gods had broken their bond. I fell upon a stale and ordered world, where all went by the clock. To all that was surprising the men about me turned a deaf ear; and my own ears became the deafest of any. The very *Zeitgeist* seemed against me. ‘*Unbewohnte Inseln*’ had been expunged from the Map of Life. All coastlines surveyed; a lighthouse on every promontory; a warning bell on every shoal; ships built in watertight compartments; every bottom insured at Lloyds; wrecks treated as misdemeanours; court-martials on the men who run their ships aground—what is

to become of the professional castaway in an age like this? Somnolence among the experts, I was assured, might still betray me; the navigating officer might sleep on his watch; an automatic signal might be broken by a whale; an electric current might fail to work; and then I might find myself as of old cast up by tempests on a lonely strand. But what of that? A wireless message would reveal me to the benevolent, I should be rescued next morning, and sent home in a steamer at the Government's expense.

“In those days I went with the multitude into the house of God and heard the smooth prophesyings that all men love. They showed me charts of the way to heaven; and I sat with men who had booked their passage and knew the day on which they would arrive. ‘Would not I be of their company?’ I yielded and became one of them. But it was not well with me; my heart within me was sorrowful even unto death. That weary syllogism of a world was not for me, and I hated it with the dull hatred of a beaten slave.

“One night I sat disconsolate by a sounding shore; the sea-birds screamed; the waves bellowed in the caverns; and through

all and over all I heard the tick, tock, of the everlasting pendulum—like an endless note of doom. The memory of vanished youth lay heavy on my heart; I was thinking of my many dead; their wan faces haunted me, and they whispered that I too must die; old fancies came back, but they came like gibbering ghosts and mocked me; I visited old scenes and, lo, they were disenchanted; I clothed me in Crusoe's skins, and they hung upon me like a shroud; all the islands of the sea were empty as the eye-sockets of a skull; the gates of dreams were barred, and 'nevermore' was written over every one. The very order of the world appalled me; for what was I but a cog on its wheels? 'Is there aught so wearisome as knowledge,' I cried; 'is there aught so unlovely as the known? Nothing new will ever startle me; never again shall I be taken unawares; I shall burst no more into any silent sea. All is as one knows; all goes by the book; there is nothing in life but what had to be.'

"Then it was that Truth fell towards me like a meteor out of the sky. My bitter cry had travelled far and reached the ear of ministering spirits; and an answer, clothed



in a living voice, floated down to me from the depths of space. It came from the dark and distant kingdoms of the dead ; had winged its way through leagues of silence ; and it fell upon the spiritual sense as a homing dove alights upon its nest. The tones were filtered to fineness so subtle that only the innermost chambers of hearing could hold them ; they were soft as the whispers of remembered love, pure as the horns of elfland faintly blowing in a summer dawn. I knew that voice ; what other have I known so well ? It was my Mother's. ' O foolish one,' it whispered, ' who art seeking the living among the dead. Thy whole life is one vast surprise. There is not a moment of thy conscious being whose secret thou canst penetrate.'

“ Thus was I raised from the dead in the twinkling of an eye ; born again through her who gave me birth, the mediator, perhaps, of yet Higher Power. I was my old true self ; abroad once more on the great waters, scanning the wide horizon for uncharted Isles, seeking Truth in a world where nothing repeats itself and no two moments are ever alike. Again I broke into illimitable spaces of untraversed experience, and sailed by coasts

unlit by any lighthouse, unguarded by any bell. I stood with Cortes on his Peak and saw the Ocean which no traffic has defiled ; I cast anchor under the cliffs of Patmos and spoke with Him who makes all things new.

“ Such were my new voyages ; yet, even in the furthest I never passed beyond the limits of the common day. Plain men were my companions ; familiar faces were around me ; my body passed to and fro among streets of brick houses, or wandered in old pastures where tame oxen stood knee-deep in the grass. But all day long I was breaking the barriers and peering into secrets that lie beyond the flaming walls. I went through Wonderland in evening-dress ; I made strange land-falls in a drawing-room ; I was blown ‘ ten thousand leagues awry ’ while listening to a modern play ; I saw ships foundering in a drop of rain ; I picnicked with the Anthropophagi, and dined at restaurants with ‘ men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders.’ I met a tramp—and we two passed a day and a night in the deep ; I talked with an old shepherd on the Downs—and heard the surf fall thundering on an unknown shore. I

opened the books I had read in childhood, and the wind Euroclydon blew out from the printed page and carried me away ; ancient saws burst upon me with the shock of great explosions ; the black ship staggered and plunged ; I drove under the lee of dark continents ; strange fires lit up the headlands ; hands mightier than mine grasped the rudder, and I saw One riding on the wings of the storm.

“ Desolate Islands, more than I could ever explore, more than I could count or name, I found in the men and women who press upon me every day. Nay, my own life was full of them ; the flying moment was one ; they rose out of the deep with the ticking of the clock. And once came the rushing of a mighty wind ; and the waves fled backward till the sea was no more. Then I saw that the Islands were great mountains uplifted from everlasting foundations, their basis one beneath the ocean floor, their summits many above the sundering waters—most marvellous of all the works of God.”

## II. MADE OUT OF NOTHING

PETER RODRIGHT was the senior partner in the firm of Rodright & Co., Limited. His seniority was absolute, for the firm was Peter and Peter was the firm, the "Co." and the "limited" being mere concessions to the fitness of things. The Many, if it ever existed, had been absorbed into the One, and that One was Peter. Moreover, he was a monopolist.

His monopoly was the manufacture and export of idols, and he lived in a versatile city where such things are possible. He was enormously rich and consistently hilarious, beautifully tenderhearted, and exceedingly vulgar.

He divided his time between singing, whistling, laughing, and thinking, and not infrequently he allowed these occupations to overlap. Hymn tunes were his favourite music, and these he would sing to verses of his own composition, "From Greenland's

Icy Mountains" being the tune most frequently rendered. Had you heard the words you would have concluded that Peter was an original old gentleman.

He was a profound thinker, at all events; and his business was on a scale, and of a complexity, which revealed the operation of a master-mind. He was none of your mean and grovelling money-grabbers who exploit the ideas of men abler than themselves; he bought no man's patent; he borrowed no man's inventions; he stole no man's brains; but, ceasing to whistle, laugh, or sing, he retired with a grave face into an inner office and waited on his Muse until the great ideas were born. "Some men," he said, "put what they make under their waistcoats; I put it under my 'at."

Peter cultivated the thinking faculty. Indeed, he kept himself in training for thought, and his brains were always in the pink of condition. His manner of life was austere, almost ascetic. He ate sparingly and took vigorous exercise; till the last year of his life he enjoyed perfect health. His breakfast beverage was milk and water; he drank no alcohol, of course; he smoked no tobacco. "Catch me muddlin' my 'ead

with them things!" he said. "Not me! What's at the back o' my business? *Think-in'*. What makes money in *all* business? *Thinkin'*. What's the matter with all them fellers?"—here Peter pointed to the list of bankrupts in the morning's *Times*—"they can't *think*! Misfortunes—rot!—That's a word as I learnt from that young shaver o' mine at Eton—though there's not much he can teach *me*, I can tell you.—There never was a business that couldn't be pulled through wi' *thinkin'*. Look here! I'd bet two to one—though I'm not a betting man—that more than half them bankrupts are smokers. Smokin'! Pshaw! I'll tell you what smokin' does for a man. *It shortens his 'ead!* Breaks business up into jumpy bits. Spoils all the long shots.

"There was a German chap come into my office last year—same line o' business as me. He'd got a scheme for me and him to work the Congo together—a sort o' 'delimitation of the sphere of influence' arrangement. Well, we hadn't been talkin' two minutes when he pulls out a big cigar. As soon as I smelt the smoke I says to myself, 'All right, Mr German. Your sphere o' influence 'll get its goose cooked before you're much older.'

And I knocked him out o' the Congo market in six months—easy as wink!

“Yes, sir, *thinkin's* what does it! Look at my business. Why nobody'd ever suppose as there could *be* such a business. That's because they don't *think*. I've *made* my business wi' *thinkin'*—made it out o' nothing at all. Don't you tell me as the world was never made out o' nothing! I've read all about that. I read a lot more than many men as had better eddication nor me. *Of course* it was made out o' nothing—same as my business was—what else was there to make it out of? And what made it? *Thinkin'*, my boy.”

Which observation concluded, Mr Rodright would presently hum a few bars of Greenland's Icy Mountains and break forth into unauthorised song.

Rodright's goods are to be found in all countries of the world both savage and civilised, the only place where you cannot obtain them being the city where they are manufactured. Observe those three innocent little dots at the foot of the exquisite bronze Buddha which you purchased for twenty pounds from that unimpeachable dealer in Yokohama. They are the trade-

mark of Rodright & Co., Limited, and may be taken to mean that the price of production was half a crown. Or turn to that beautiful old grandfather clock in the Sheraton case, the envy of all your friends as they hang their fur coats in your vestibule; recall the reluctance of the old cottager to part with his heirloom, and the tears he shed, and the shame you felt, as you handed him seven five-pound notes; and then take a strong magnifying-glass and look for three minute dots in the lower left-hand corner of the clock face. Or take the set of silver buttons which aroused your cupidity as they gleamed on the waistcoat of the peasant who rowed you across the Norwegian Fjord. Was it not something of a Vandalism to bribe the old fellow to cut them off; and was it altogether fair to conceal from him that they were precious Danish coins of the seventeenth century? But never mind; they now adorn your wife's evening dress; and there are three dots on the edge of every one of them.

As to Rodright's idols, which were the mainstay of the business, tell me, if you can, of any country where they are not worshipped. They hang round the neck



of the Eskimo as he spears the seal ; they tower to a height of thirty feet in the village of Alaskan Indians ; incense is burnt before them on the quarter-decks of Chinese junks ; the Australian savage has one in his mouth ; in the forests of the Congo, in the farthest Isles of the South Sea, thousands of human beings are at this moment flat on their bellies before Rodright's works. "Wherever Bass's beer can go, I can foller," said the Head of the Firm. No potentate of modern times has had a wider sphere of influence. Even science is not exempt from his sway. For Rodright's idols have been discovered in Egypt and in Mexico, buried under the detritus of ages ; they repose under glass in many University museums ; anthropologists study them, and courses of lectures are delivered in their honour.

But let no one be alarmed nor dismayed. "I've played the game fair and straight from the first," said Peter. "My goods are true to sample, and don't you forget it. They're *correct*. If you can prove to *me* that them bronze Buddhas has got a wrong line in 'em, I'll have the mould broke up to-morrow, though it cost me a thousand

pounds to get another. Here, take that Greek coin and put it under the microscope. It's real gold, isn't it? Well, *that's* all right. Now look at the shape of that king's nose—it's Alexander, isn't it?—no, it's one of the Seleucidæ—Oh yes, I know all about them—good lookin' fellers too! Now then for the original—here—put it under the microscope—got that nose to a T, hasn't he? Well, what more do you want? What do you think I pay the man as makes them dies? Nine hundred a year, my boy, and don't you forget it. He's a Hitalian. There isn't another man in Europe as can touch him: no, nor in America neither, though they've got some pretty smart 'uns over there.

“Same wi' my clocks. I'll defy you to find a clock as we've ever turned out wi' two styles mixed up in it—and makers' styles at that. And tip-top works in 'em too. I tell you it's a straight game, all through. You buy one of my Sheratons, and you can bet your bottom dollar as it's a Sheraton you've got. And what's more—it'll keep time.

“There's a lot o' hanky-panky in the idol trade; but our firm never got mixed

up with it—and isn't going to be, neither. Now take Liberia. There isn't a firm in Europe except ours as can get their goods up-country into the Hinterland. Why? Because the Liberians know we're *straight*. Our three dots on a case o' goods is the hall-mark o' purity. What's wrong with the others? Well, I'll tell you.

“You remember that smoking German as I told you I did a down on. Well, he let on to me as he'd got a cargo o' gods on the West Coast—and *something inside 'em to make 'em work*. Then he told me as how the Liberian Government had turned awkward and wouldn't let him land his goods. So he wanted to sell the lot to me and cable his skipper to take the stuff to the Congo under our name. After a bit we come to an agreement. He was to send his skipper to port and I was to instruct our agent to buy the goods, if satisfied on inspection with the quality for the Congo market. The minute he left the office—Pflug was his name—I cables to our agent on the Coast—‘Inspect Pflug's cargo and report; suspect contraband.’ Next day comes our agent's reply: ‘Cargo crooked; *bottle o' gin inside every god*: have in-

formed Government.' Result was that as soon as Pflug's skipper came to port the Congo boarded him, opened his cases, tapped his gods, and cancelled his licence to trade there and then. And from that day to this I've had the Congo market all to myself."

I have said that Peter was enormously rich, and I have now to add that his public munificence was commensurate with his wealth. To describe his giving as "princely" would be to credit princes with more liberality than they usually possess. "'Ow much has the Dook given?" he would say to the Finance Committee. "One thousand? Then put me down for ten. And if you keep my name out of it I'll give you another ten in two years' time." Education stood first among the public causes to which he gave support; and he laid down the stern condition that it must be "up-to-date." He was well versed in the literature of this subject, and studied the official reports of what other countries were doing. The lines on which more than one modern University has been founded were virtually dictated by Rodright—and posterity will have no cause to regret it. He was also actively interested in the Housing of the Poor, and

bought up slum areas, which he promptly cleared and covered with model dwellings. As I shall relate in a subsequent chapter, he helped my friend, Professor Denison, to build his Settlement, though I doubt whether the results of that great social experiment, had he lived to see them, would have pleased him.

But the strangest thing of all was his generosity to Foreign Missions. Look at the subscription list of any of these enterprises, and if you see a large sum standing opposite the word "Anon" the chances are that Rodright was the benefactor. It would sometimes happen that the Directors of the Mission, on learning the source of these anonymous offerings, would evince considerable reluctance to receive them. But a theory was started to the effect that Rodright was yielding to the prick of conscience and seeking to make some atonement for his sins. On the strength of that theory the gifts were allowed to pass; but I have my doubts whether the theory was true. At all events it was not the account which Rodright himself gave of the matter.

"Missions!" he said; "why, of course I support 'em. They're my Intelligence De-

partment. Look at that map." He pointed to a big map, hanging on the wall of his office, on which the Christianised portion of the world's surface was painted red and the idolatrous portions black. The great ethnic religions were represented by other colours—green for Mohammedanism, yellow for Buddhism. "Our travellers work the Black and the Yellow. Never made a cent on the Green since I started business—at least not in idols. Then look at them books." A row of shelves stood by the wall. On the upper was a comprehensive collection of works on Anthropology and the History of Primitive Religions; on the lower were scores of Annual Reports of Missionary Societies. "We've got hundreds of designs out o' them books. And that Missionary Exhibition was a little gold-mine to my trade. I sent the whole of our drawin' staff to make sketches. Why, there was a Missionary Meetin' in the Town 'All last month, and I'd 'eard as a collection of idols was to be shown. Me and our 'ead designer was there, of course; we always go to them things. Most of what the Missionary showed was no good; big sprawlin' things as you couldn't ship; but

there was one little feller as was a real beauty—no bigger than the palm o' your hand. 'Sketch him, Tom,' I says to our designer; 'there's money in that one.' And we're sending eight gross to Corea next week.

"There's some folks," he went on, "as don't believe in Foreign Missions. Well, I *do* believe in 'em. What's the matter with 'em is that they're not up-to-date. If we conducted our business as they do theirs, we'd be up the spout next week. They don't study the markets. They don't send out the right sort o' goods. They don't work together. They don't *think*. But they'll come all right in time. No, sir, if people say as I'm against Missions, they're wrong. I've studied savage countries—yes, and I've travelled in 'em too; and I tell you that if all the black places were painted Red to-morrow nobody's be gladder than me—though I've a great respect for the Green and I'm not afraid of the Yellow. Injure our business? Not it! Our big profits are not made on the Black; they're made on the Yellow and the Red, and them colours are safe enough. There's more profit on a dozen bronze Buddhas than on

half a shipful of them things we send to the West Coast. Besides, do you think we've not learnt to adapt ourselves to circumstances ?

“And I'll tell you another thing. Our firm's doin' more to show up idolatry than all the missionaries put together. You don't see it ? Well, think it out and you'll see it right enough. You just go and talk to one of our travellers and he'll tell you why.

“And then what about the curio market ? We've got a motto in our business—‘The more Christians, the more curios.’ When idols go down curios go up—that's a law of the trade. Take them bronze Buddhas again ; or, better still, the Old Ivories. We couldn't sell 'em to the heathen for more than five or six shillings apiece ; and we're sellin' 'em to Christians to-day at anything from ten pound up. On commission, of course—our agents arrange all that. No, sir, we've not made the mistake of puttin' all our eggs in one basket.”

This last remark was eminently true. Rodright's business was a miracle of difference in unity. His Prehistoric Man Department did a roaring trade in flint implements, Peruvian grave pottery, dolicho-cephalic



skulls, and such like. There was also an Egyptian Tombs Department, which was equipped with a costly plant for the manufacture of mummies and all needful accessories. In this connection it was rumoured that Rodright procured his raw material from a firm in San Francisco, which did a large trade with the Chinese population in desiccating the bodies of deceased relatives prior to shipment for burial in China. Many of these desiccated Chinamen, so it was said, found their way into Rodright's factory, where they were correctly treated, according to a standard treatise on Egyptian Embalming, and subsequently put on the market with three dots in the corner of the left eye. However this may be, Rodright was prepared to supply the purchaser, whether scientific or amateur, with an entire tomb, completely decorated in any style, and furnished with sarcophagus, mummy, or skeleton (of man and dog), rusted weapons, drinking bowls, ornaments, and all the paraphernalia of the dead, according to the age and country in demand. As we have seen, he was also remarkably successful in the production of ancient coins. Aided by a staff of skilled metallurgists, microscopists,

and designers, he had brought this industry to perfection, and had practically extinguished foreign competition, in spite of Free Trade, by the sheer excellence of his goods. "As good as the originals; and, if anything, better," was his own description of these wares.

His last and perhaps his boldest stroke, which he did not live to complete, was what he called "a new line in Buried Treasure." He had recently produced some Spanish pieces-of-eight, which had deceived the very elect. One day, being at the seaside, he was watching the destruction of an ancient pier which in old time had been used by vessels sailing to Ireland and had now become an obstacle to the navigation of an important channel. An immense baulk of timber, covered with sea-shell and shaggy with weed, was in process of being lifted and swung ashore by a crane. For a moment the mass hung motionless in mid-air at the end of the chain; and Rodright, who was thinking about Spanish pieces-of-eight, saw it absent-mindedly. Suddenly he fancied that he heard the beam calling to him by name. "Rod, Rod," it seemed to say—"Rod, Rod, wake up; you're losing a chance."

Now Rodright, as became a maker of idols, was a reader of the poets, and Tennyson was his favourite. That very morning the old man, seated on the sands under the shade of a big umbrella, had been listening to *Ulysses*, excellently read by his gifted daughter. What wonder then that the beam, after its first familiar appeal, should take upon itself to indulge in a quotation? Quite distinctly, as it seemed to Rodright, came the words—

“Something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note may yet be done,  
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.”

Hereupon the beam, which up to this moment had been evenly balanced at the end of the chain, dipped profoundly towards Rodright, as though it were making a bow; and the old man instinctively raised his hat in response. Then the donkey-engine snorted and the beam, recovering its equilibrium, was swung ashore.

Instantly Rodright felt himself smitten through with the power of a great inspiration. He dashed from the beach as fast as his failing old legs could carry him; called a taxi-cab from the rank; pushed his expostulating daughter into the vehicle; drove

to the offices of Mr Smith, Agent to Lord Blank—the owner of the pier; and there and then purchased the whole mass of rotten timbers at a fancy price.

The vision with which Rodright had been thus suddenly, almost miraculously, inspired was that of a wrecked Spanish Galleon at the bottom of the sea. Such a wreck it was now the mission of his firm to construct, and the timbers of the ancient pier were to be used for the purpose. The wreck was to be sunk in a likely place (“I know the exact spot, my boy,” he would say); plant for the manufacture of corroded shot and cannon was to be laid down; these were to sink the timbers in the first instance, and constitute a preliminary “find” in the second; a few tons of pieces-of-eight were to be buried at a proper depth in the sea silt; and the whole scientifically discovered by experts after a proper interval had been allowed for working up the evidence, constructing ancient maps, and whetting the appetite of the public. Rodright confessed to his confederates that this was by far the most difficult undertaking of his long and arduous life; he was heard more than once to utter the wish that he was twenty

years younger ; his rendering of Greenland's Icy Mountains became noticeably flat ; and there was something forced in his voice as he repeated his wonted confession of faith that "*thinking* would pull it through." "Them sea-changes," he added, "are plaguey things to reproduce. But our 'ead chemist has never been beaten yet."

When a man dies at the age of eighty-three it is perhaps incorrect to say that anything has killed him. But there is reason to suspect that "the new line in Buried Treasure" gave the finishing blow to Old Rod. His last audible words were, "Sink her by the stern, Tommy, and don't blow her up till she's well settled."

Of Rodright's views on Church and State I shall content myself by giving an indication, or rather a sample. He was a Tory in politics ; but his views were based less on the conviction that his own party was right than on contempt for the policies of his opponents. "Them Radicals," he would say, "don't know how to play their own game. Look at all this 'ere Radical Finance. Taxin' the rich ! Why, there's no such thing. You can't tax the *rich*. Me and another big-pocketty man was talkin' it over

in the Club last night. 'Rod,' he says to me, 'how much is your sovereign worth since the last Budget?' 'Fifteen bob at most,' I says. 'Well,' he says, 'does it 'urt you?' 'Not a bit,' I says, 'the smaller they makes my sovereign, the more sovereigns I makes—that's all.' 'Same 'ere,' says he.

"Why, doesn't it stand to sense that for every one the Radicals hits us we can hit 'em two back. Tax us to maintain the Navy? And where would my trade be if we hadn't got a fleet in the China Seas? Why, the Germans would get it to-morrow. Tax us for eddication? And what would *we* do if we couldn't get eddicated 'ands? No Board Schools, no business. Who's afraid of socialism? Let 'em socialise everything they can get 'old of, and thinkin' men like me—men with seven-and-a-quarter 'ats, and all the width in front, mind you—'ll get round the Socialists before they've had their breakfasts. Who's going to stop us makin' money? Not —— (and here he named a reigning Chancellor). He can tax till he's out of breath for all I care—and I'll get home half an hour before he does every time. Them fellers are no good at the long shot; and it's the long shot that makes money—and keeps

it. There never was a tax since the world began as didn't work out in the long-run for the benefit of the rich. It's the men as can't hold on as get 'ard 'it. Them as can, that's the rich, come out on top every time. Taxation ruins the middle classes and gives the rich a chance to buy 'em up at a knock-out price. It's the middling people and the poor I'm sorry for, not the rich. Nobody's helped the poor more than I have. No, I'm not going to *pretend*. I know all about the Publican and the Pharisee, *but you won't catch me pretending I'm the Publican!* I give a lot o' money away and I don't care who knows it—no, nor who doesn't know it. But I don't give none to politics, no, not even to my own side. There's better ways of doin' good nor that.

“Ever 'eard what I did after the Radical Budget of 18—? It looked at first as though that Budget was going to 'it the likes o' me pretty 'ard. But what did I do? The very day as it come out I began *thinking*, and before the year was done we were goin' strong in old ivories—things we'd never touched before. I made eight thou' out of old ivories in the next twelve months. And now listen to a curious thing. It happened—though I

didn't know it at the time—as the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a great collector of old ivories. Well, last year I was stayin' in the country, and a friend of mine took me to see the Chancellor's big show house. The housekeeper took us round, and one of the first things she showed us was Sir Robert's collection of old ivories—standin' in the hall. I'd got my glass out in a twinklin'—and blest if there wasn't our three dots on more than half of 'em! They must have cost him thousands of pounds. Now just you do a bit o' thinkin' and that'll show you how men like me can get home before the Chancellor of the Exchequer does."

On the question of International Trade Mr Rodright held certain theories which, so far as I know, have not yet been mentioned in the Parliamentary Debates on Tariff Reform. He was by no means willing to admit the principle that each country should be left undisturbed to follow the line of manufacture indicated by its natural aptitudes. He was even known to maintain, on occasion, that the precise opposite was the truth; though a critic might say that, in supporting this extreme view, he was too fond of quoting his own business as an



illustration. The general heresy, indeed, can hardly be claimed as original to Rodright; but the particular application of it was all his own, and took a turn equally unwelcome to the advocates both of Free Trade and of Tariff Reform. "If you want to make *easy* money," he would say, "export your goods *to the countries where they're made*. You don't believe in sending coals to Newcastle? Why, Newcastle's just the place to send 'em to. Where else will they find as ready a market? Where else will they fetch as good a price?"

Certainly no one could accuse Rodright of inconsistency with these principles. He supplied Venice with glass, Limoges with fine pottery, Japan with lacquer—all of the best. His detractors were wont to say that he furnished gold-dust to mining companies having concessions in West Africa. I do not believe this part of the story; rascality of that kind was not in the line of Rodright's operations, and the proposal, if ever made (as it may well have been), would certainly have involved the proposer in consequences similar to those which befell the unfortunate Pflug. But I can vouch for another story told me by a young man

who had been complaining to Rodright about the unprofitableness of the business on which his father had embarked him. "Why don't you make a change?" he said to the young man; "try the bun-trade, and send your buns to Bath. There's a fortune in Bath Buns. All you want is a first-class cook—a man as can turn out a tip-top bun of uniform quality—and then set up a big distributing house in Bath. And pay everybody a good wage, and give your cook a commission on profits." In which connection I am reminded of a remark made by one of Rodright's workmen: "The boss is a downy 'un. But a better master never lived."

The one gloomy spot in Rodright's otherwise radiant existence—and it was a pretty large spot—was to be found among his domestic relationships. Mrs Rodright was precisely the silliest of women. She talked incessantly, and she talked nonsense. She was ostentatious and gullible, qualities from which her husband, with all his faults, was entirely free. For many years she had been an ardent spiritualist, and had connections with the lowest and most disreputable class of mediums, who reaped a rich harvest from her

credulity. To Rodright she was a veritable burden; her chatter was a constant thorn in his flesh, uncomplainingly borne; and the frauds of which she was the victim annoyed him still more. We shall hear further of Mrs Rodright in another connection, and an incident will be related from which the reader will be able to judge of her fitness to be the lifelong companion of a gentleman with a seven-and-a-quarter 'at, width all in front.

She bore her husband six children—three sons and three daughters. The Christian names of the sons were respectively Livingstone, Schliemann, and Pitt-Rivers; of the daughters, Ann, Jane, and Sarah. By a not infrequent trick of Fate the daughters inherited their father's ability, and the sons their mother's want of it. The two elder daughters were in the business: Ann was head of the Old Lace Department; Jane was in the Drawing Office. Sarah was a musician, and the constant companion of her father in his leisure hours. She played Mozart with exquisite taste—Mozart, who, in Rodright's estimation, stood highest among all the great composers of the world. "There's no humbug in him, no sham," said the old man. "His music's like my goods—true to sample.

Here, Sarah, my dear, play us that Concerto in D, there's a good gel."

The sons were a constant source of shame to the father, not so much because they were vicious as because they were stupid. "I'd forgive a bit o' wickedness," he said, "if only they were not such fools—and lazy fools at that." Contrary to his general theory of education he had sent the boys to Public Schools in the hope, as he said, "that one or other on 'em would turn out a Classical Scholar. We want a Classical Scholar in our business, one as really knows what's what. I've lost thousands o' pounds in my time through being only an amatoor and having to mug it all up for myself.

"Look at our Schliemann. His eddication, what with Eton and what with Oxford, has cost me a matter o' two thousand eight hundred pound. And what 'ave Eton and Oxford taught 'im? Nothing that's worth knowin'—but a lot that isn't. He'd ha' got a much better eddication in a Board School. 'Now Schlie, my lad,' I says, when I sent him to Oxford, 'go in strong for Greek Archæology, and I'll make you a partner when you're twenty-five.' Well, he studied Greek Archæology for three years—at least he pretended

to—and when he'd done, blest if he knew the difference between a Tanagra figure and an Egyptian god! Of course he'd never done a stroke o' work, and when I taxed him with it he had the impudence to say as he'd been 'rottin'' the whole time he was there. That's what most of them do, as far as I can judge. It costs you four or five hundred a year, and all they learn is to waste their time, and stick their 'ands in their pockets, and smoke cigarettes—and then you have to pay their debts. And what are you to do with 'em when they come out? They'd spoil any business you put 'em to. Leave 'em my money? Not *me*. It'll all go to public objects when my old woman's done with it and the gels has been provided for. And to think that ignorant Johnnies like them should be ashamed of their own father—for that's what they are. And they'll be a bit more ashamed when they read my will!

“I'd give a thousand pounds down to any man as would take our Schlie and make him work steady for twelve months—no matter what—shovellin' coals if you like. Three months in jail 'ud do him no harm—blest if it would. I've given him chance after chance. Last spring I put him on a

Buryin' Party as I was sending out with a big stock o' antiques to the Isles o' Greece. They hadn't been there a week before I got a telegram from the foreman to say as Schlie was in trouble at Ithaca; he'd been foolin' about with a pistol among the natives, and I can tell you that if our firm hadn't had a pull on the Greek Government they'd ha' hanged him there and then. Last news was as he was in Asia Minor—somewhere back o' Smyrna. We've not heard from him for five months. P'raps the brigands have nabbed him. If they have they can keep him for me—and I wish 'em luck. It's enough to break a father's 'eart. If it wasn't that my business kep' me cheerful I'd go and drown myself—that I would."

The firm of Rodright & Co., Limited, is still in existence; but I have heard that the character of its business has been considerably changed. On the old man's death it passed under the direction of his two daughters, Ann and Jane. Clever as these women were, they yet lacked the qualities which had been essential to the father's success, namely, a poetic imagination and a surprising sense of humour. On his death-bed he had

given them certain counsels, of which the chief was: "There's big money in jokes, my dears. Take the business with a light 'eart, but attend to the thinkin'." The last part of this injunction Ann and Jane were fully competent to carry out; but the first part fell on barren soil. They took it all too seriously; and the consequence was that when they fell under the influence of a certain noble-minded ecclesiastic in those parts, their hearts not only lost their lightness but sank altogether. The prick of conscience grew active and intolerable. Hence it has come to pass that the goods now supplied by Rodright & Co. are thoroughly genuine. The great factory has become the central emporium for antiques of indisputable authenticity.

But a curious thing has happened. The production of the celebrated "fakes" having ceased altogether, these fakes have themselves passed into the category of antiques, with the result that the prices of all articles marked with three dots are greatly enhanced. In all other respects the profits of the firm have declined.

Collectors of genuine "Rodrights" have now, indeed, become numerous, and the

bidding at sales for offered specimens is always brisk. The vogue had its origin, I think, among American millionaires, and several famous collections already exist in that country. Since the advent into the market of Mr Cyrus K. Plentibutton, the great sausage-king of Chicago, the available supply has almost disappeared. Plentibutton's agents attend all the sales, outbidding everybody, and even invade private houses in quest of the coveted treasures. One of these gentlemen recently offered a friend of mine fifteen pounds for a lovely Tanagra figure which Rodright allowed my friend to put in his pocket when inspecting his "Works," assuring him that the cost price was exactly sevenpence - halfpenny. My friend tells me that he is holding for a higher price. And the fair reader will not have forgotten that Miss Cora Plentibutton, recently married to the Duke of Stonehenge, was arrayed at the wedding in a magnificent bridal veil of Old Venetian lace, "by Rodright"—the gift of the Dowager Duchess. Since this announcement was made in the Press the prices of Rodright lace, and indeed of all his productions, have gone up by leaps and bounds ; and an instance is on



record of a piece of Rodright "Venetian" being put up to auction and fetching nearly double the price of the original from which it had been copied, sold some months earlier by the same auctioneers. I have heard it whispered, and can well believe the truth of the rumour, that a firm of German Jews in New York has already commenced the manufacture of spurious "Rodrights," and the alleged specimens of their work which I have seen are certainly promising. And others no doubt will follow.

Indeed, as we reflect upon these things, it is as though we were standing in a Hall of Mirrors and gazing upon imaged images repeated to all infinity. They fill the vistas of the future; and do they not also fill the vistas of the past? And here I cannot refrain from quoting a remark made to me by a philosophic friend to whom I had appealed for light on the deeper significance of Rodright's enterprise. "Rodright," he said to me, "is the name not merely of an historical person, but of an Eternal Principle."

Nor must I omit from this record the tribute paid to Rodright's thoroughness by a French writer on Numismatics. The works of this famous savant stood, with

many others of the same class, on the bookshelves in Rodright's inner office; and it was said by experts that his Italian designer must have made a free use of the Frenchman's illustrations in the fabrication of his dies. The savant, on some specimens of the Rodright issue being submitted to him, confirmed the suspicions of the English experts, especially in regard to the coinage of Alexander the Great; he said they were undoubtedly copied from his own book, but added that the Rodright imitations, on minute comparison, were in no respect inferior to the superb originals from which he had taken the photographic reproductions shown in the text of his work. No wonder; for if you will place one of these photographs under a powerful microscope, you will find the Three Dots, faintly discernible in the proper place. Which things seem to be a parable.

### III. THE TRAGEDY OF PROFESSOR DENISON

#### I. THE MAN TO WHOM NOTHING HAPPENED

“A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew,  
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,  
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,  
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks  
Were bent and tangled across the walks ;  
And the leafless network of parasite bowers  
Massed into ruin ; and all sweet flowers.”

SHELLEY.

THE Man to whom Nothing Happened was Gabriel Denison, Professor of Sociology. He was a great scholar ; his learning was intensively compact and extensively enormous ; and he could hold his own with experts on a vast variety of topics. In this he was often compared with W. E. Gladstone, to whom, by the way, he bore some personal resemblance.

He was one of six brothers, all dis-

tinguished men. Two were Double Firsts ; one has been in the Cabinet ; another is making £4000 a year in India ; a third is an eminent pathologist ; a fourth is the Headmaster of a Public School. All of them have written books, for to be a Denison is to be an author ; and it has been said that if the books written by Denisons were gathered together they would make a large and fairly comprehensive library.

From the psychological point of view Denison's professorship was hereditary. His grandfather was Augustus Denison, the famous Professor of Greek ; his father, Septimus Denison, Professor of Medical Jurisprudence. When Gabriel was twelve years old his future professorship was treated as a matter of course. In much the same tone of voice as one would use in saying, "the train will reach Brighton at 4.15," the elder Denisons would say, "Gabriel will get his Chair before he is thirty-five" ; and he received the appointment at thirty-two.

Indeed, the presence of a Professor Denison in the scheme of things, as a necessary condition of its maintenance, was an implicit article of the family faith ; for how

could the sun rise or the flowers blow unless some Professor Denison was there to be conscious, yes, critically conscious, of what was going on? There was a story, which I heard from an old servant of the family, that once, when Gabriel and his brothers were playing a game of "Joseph in the Prison," and the parts of chief butler and chief baker had been duly allotted to two of the younger boys, a great quarrel broke out among the others as to who was to take the part of Pharaoh's Professor Denison; nor was peace restored to the nursery until the bright little governess had assured the disputants that the Scripture Narrative at this point contained no reference to such a person, Professor Denison not having been invented till a later period in the History of the Jews.

His life was like a broad river fed by many tributaries but unbroken by a single cataract. A cross-section of it taken from one part of its course would have seemed very like a section taken from any other. Or you may liken it to a tall umbrageous tree planted in a sunny spot unvisited by storms. Denison fed on ideas as the tree feeds by its roots; he absorbed them as the leaves

absorb the light. But the oak-splitting thunderbolt had never riven him; the wild boar had never sharpened its tusks upon his bark. Every year his circumference spread wider; the birds of the air built their nests among his branches, and wayfaring companies lodged under his shadow. He had many diplomas but few scars.

Born and bred in an intellectual sanctuary, it was no wonder that Denison possessed the academic mind. His friends, with whom he played golf of an afternoon, or drank port in the Common Room of an evening, were of the same class with his brothers, his uncles, and his ancestors; all were men of intelligence and culture, living without disturbance and without distress, and going on from strength to strength by regular marches of fixed amount.

Learned investigators as they all were, it can hardly be said that curiosity was one of their vices. Many of them had the gift of Irony, and this gave a moderate alertness to their powers of observation; but Pity, with its keener eye for secret things, came more rarely among them, and when it came

they were as men who feel their nakedness and hide themselves away. Hence their vision, keen enough in the prosecution of their own business, was cursory and shortsighted when applied to human life; and though some of them were trained psychologists, they were slow diviners of the human heart. To all that was explosive, unexpected, or apocalyptic these gentlemen turned an incredulous ear or a face of contempt.

Their minds were like old gardens that had been digged and dunged for eight hundred years; they were full of flowers, fruit, and vegetables—all of the best, with many a trim lawn and vine-hung pergola, but with no wild roses and scarcely any weeds. To turn the desert into a garden of the Lord, like unto their own, was their high ambition and their appointed task. Few of them paused to reflect how wild the garden was in which the Lord was once seen walking in the cool of the day.

As the caterpillar grows into the likeness of the twig on which it feeds, as the hare and the partridge borrow the colours of the brown earth and lie invisible among its

furrows, so the mind of Professor Denison had become of one piece with its environment, dyed deep in every fibre with the complexion of the medium in which it worked. His world was an embodied syllogism; the Creator was its Author in an almost literary sense; and the history of men and nations unfolded itself from first principles like a course of lectures. In that world Events never "happened." They "took place," falling into niches which had been fitted and upholstered for their reception before the foundation of the world. Seats, so to say, had been reserved for them, and the events arrived, like people at the opera, each one with a numbered ticket in his hand. To live was simply to develop your implications, to actualise the possibilities which lay prefigured in your soul, as the acorn prefigures the oak. The very atmosphere had an *a priori* character; men lived deductively and died by the book. In Denison's manner of walking, as in that of many of his colleagues, there was something that reminded one of the steps of a demonstration. All the Denisons had the same walk, so that if you had seen the Professor in the street with his two daughters



you would have ventured a guess that the name of the one was Barbara, and of the other, Celarent.

With Death, as a reality, Denison had little acquaintance. He had heard of it with the hearing of the ear; but he belonged to a family remarkable for longevity, and I have heard him say that he had never looked on the face of the dead. Not once had his own life been threatened either by disease or by accident; he had loved but not lost; and what he knew of the black sorrow of bereavement he knew only at second hand, and as a theme for elegy. Of death as a visible terror, of death as an amazement to the living, of death as the fruit of sin or the price of love, he thought as little as he did of slaughter and blood when eating butchers' meat. As he carved the mutton for his large and healthy family it might perhaps occur to him that the limb he was hacking to pieces had once belonged to a living sheep; but the thought in his mind was a conclusion from premises. The visualised picture of the gleaming knife or dying animal, of the slaughterman spattered with blood, of the hideous disembowelling of the warm carcase, had never

haunted nor sickened him. Death of this kind, when it first came under Denison's notice, was a thing to be gingerly placed on the dining-table by a white-aproned parlour-maid, a thing browned all over and stuffed with sausages and garnished with mashed potatoes and brussels sprouts. And human death in like manner was an affair of funerals, solemn faces, and black clothes, of clergymen and tombstones, of obituary notices and letters of condolence. As to his own mortality—that too was an inference from general principles. All men are mortal—Gabriel Denison is a man—therefore Gabriel Denison must die. The premises were true; the conclusion was valid; and like a good logician he accepted both. But no vision of his own decease, with a bottle of futile physic on one side of the bed, a couple of doctors on the other, and a weeping face in the background, had ever daunted him for a moment. These shivering thoughts which come to lean-jawed men who lie awake o' nights, came not to the eupeptic Denison; for he fell asleep the instant he laid head to pillow, and never turned in his bed till the maid brought his shaving water at 7 a.m. Of day-dreams, whether

morbid or wholesome, he had none; he was far too busy for such idle luxuries. Thus it came to pass that the only certain fact of human life, the only event in predicting which the prophet can never err, was hidden from Denison's consciousness behind impenetrable walls.

But in spite of all this, or perhaps in consequence of it, the Professor was a thoroughly good fellow. He was excellent company, especially for young men; for he was a thoroughgoing optimist, and his mind was teeming with projects for the improvement of the world. You could never take a walk with him without hearing from his lips something you would remember all your life; and though you might sometimes sigh to think that one who knew so much about the difficult things should yet know so little of the easy ones, and though his sheltered ignorance of human tragedy might provoke you to momentary bitterness or irritation, you were compelled in the long-run to love him and to pay your homage to the artless dignity of his soul.

Thus he continued to live, educing the conclusions which were latent in the premises

of his life, until the time came for something to "happen."

Denison's eldest son was the most brilliant youth in the University. He was also an athlete, and a beautiful person to look upon. A seeker in quest of the perfect type of a young Englishman would have looked no farther after meeting Arnold Denison. His great arched eyebrows, his lustrous slow-moving eyes, his radiant smile, his air of quiet mastery—ah! if I could only describe him! I used to go out of my way to meet that boy and bid him good morning; and, having seen his face, I was ready for whatever ills the day might have in store.

Every distinction it was possible for him to win Arnold Denison had carried off without turning a hair. During the period of his earlier trials he had not lost an hour's sleep nor failed to eat his breakfast with a good appetite. It was known that he worked at high pressure; but he played at high pressure too, and the two things seemed a safe combination.

The trouble came on the day when Arnold was to sit for a College Fellowship. For some weeks he had been ailing and restless,

and peevish as a spoilt child. The doctor, two doctors, were called in, and they prescribed various things. The treatment prospered, and on the night before the examination Arnold, to all seeming, was perfectly well and hopeful of success. He whistled as usual on leaving the house, and when I shouted my good wishes from the other side of the street he replied with a cheery "Right Ho!"

Ten minutes later he took his place in the Examination Hall and the attendant gave him his paper. Arnold reached out his hand to take it; but his fingers refused to close and the paper dropped to the ground. A pink mist swam before him; it turned to brilliant violet, edged with gold; then it blackened, and all objects became invisible; he wondered where he was, who he was; and all of a sudden panic struck him like a thunderbolt. All this happened in the instant while the attendant was picking up the paper which had fallen from his fingers. On looking up he saw Arnold stretched back in his chair, deadly pale; his body was jerking convulsively; his mouth was twisted to the side in a hideous grimace; one arm hung powerless. They carried him home,

his right side paralysed from head to foot.

That night I saw Professor Denison. He was excited and off his balance; it was the first time I had ever seen him thus. "It's an unheard of thing—an incredible thing—paralysis in so young a man," he said. "There's absolutely nothing to account for it. I can't make it out. Why, until the last three weeks the boy has never known an ache or a tremor; and I've had him examined three times by the best doctors in the city. Bathurst assured me only last Thursday that there was absolutely no risk in his going on with his work, and Codrington confirmed. I've watched him myself. I went into his room last night and he was sleeping as peacefully as a little child. I tell you it's altogether inexplicable—inscrutable.

"And yet I can't help blaming myself. I ought to have insisted on a thorough auscultation this morning—immediately before the examination. The arterial pressure ought to have been carefully tested. But he seemed so well that I was put off my guard. If only I had sent for Bathurst at eight o'clock—as I thought

of doing—he would have detected something wrong and the thing would never have taken place. Oh, I blame myself, bitterly, bitterly! It might have been prevented. However, I'm convinced that the case is not beyond the resources of medical science. And if medicine fails, there is always surgery to fall back upon. They'll pull him through—Bathurst assures me they will. We've sent for a London specialist—the greatest authority of the age for this kind of thing. Bathurst is quite hopeful—so's Codrington. But of course nothing can be decided till Sir Gilbert has given his opinion. Depend upon it, they'll pull him through between them, though I'm doubtful if the boy will ever be able——” And the poor man could say no more.

After a long and varied course of treatment Arnold Denison was reported to be on the road to recovery. Medical science, in the person of Sir Gilbert Blair, had achieved a wonderful, though not a complete, success. The paralysis had been overcome, but the young man's health seemed to be seriously impaired. I saw him

immediately after his return from the last of the many watering-places to which he had been taken; we spent a pathetic hour together, he pretending that he was well, and I pretending to believe him; and I confess that the words of hope and congratulation I spoke to his parents on leaving were not true to the inner divinations of my heart.

Six months later symptoms of a fresh malady appeared. Enough that the thing was mysterious and the doctors were utterly unable to give it a name. Or rather they gave it so many names, and changed the name so often, that it became virtually nameless. It was curious to note what immense importance Professor Denison attached to this kaleidoscopic nomenclature. "We're on the track of it now," he would say triumphantly, when I stopped him in the street. "Fallowes has definitely diagnosed the symptoms as—so-and-so." Ten days later he would tell me, "Fallowes, in consultation with Garnet, has slightly altered his diagnosis. He is now convinced that the trouble is not in the major, but in the minor arteries." Fresh doctors were constantly called in, not without disturbance



to the harmonious relations of the medical profession. The cities of Britain were ransacked for specialists; and I could not fail to see that Professor Gabriel Denison was losing his head. Moreover, he looked ill and worn, and even at this early stage of the crisis there was a nervousness in his manner that slightly alarmed me.

“Arnold is worse,” he said to me one morning, “but I’ve just been reminded of a man in Aberdeen who makes a special study of these cases, and I’ve wired for him to come down.” Next day I would hear, “We are all delighted with Sir Hector Mackay. I reproach myself for not having called him in before, for he would have saved all the suffering and anxiety of the last months. In five minutes he put his finger on the seat of the trouble, and Arnold’s looking a new man already.” A month later Sir Hector had followed half a dozen predecessors into the realms of oblivion. It was now Professor Oskar Blom, the great Swedish Doctor recently established in London, who had put his finger on the seat of the trouble, and by a wonderful regimen of facial exercises and cold water drinking, without drugs,

had brought a colour into Arnold's cheeks which made it hard to believe that he had ever been ill.

With the advent of each new doctor Arnold was reported to be getting better; the single steps seemed all in the right direction, but the total movement was all in the wrong. He grew weaker and weaker, and of those who saw him, no one, save his father, was under the faintest illusion as to the ultimate issue. "Thank God," the father said to me one day, "we've got a man in the house at last who understands his business. Heneage Mullins, my wife's cousin, who's at the head of the profession in Montreal, has come over from Canada, and is staying with us. He gave Arnold a thorough overhauling last night, and is convinced there is a complication with the pneumo-gastric nerve. I've put the case unreservedly in his hands, though as a relative he was somewhat reluctant to act. At his request I've telegraphed for Saunders-Wright of Guy's Hospital, and there's to be a consultation to-morrow. I suggested O'Flaherty of Dublin, who, you remember, treated the Vice-Chancellor so successfully for pneumo-gastric trouble,

but Mullins assures me that Saunders-Wright has a higher reputation—in fact, the highest in the world. As you probably know, he is the author of the standard treatise on *Senilitas Præcox*. Of course I don't like making so many changes. But I'm convinced that medical science has resources, somewhere, for meeting the obvious anomalies of this case. And there are no two men in the world more likely to command them than Heneage Mullins and Saunders-Wright."

At ten o'clock next evening I called at the Denisons' house to hear the result of the consultation. I found the Professor waiting anxiously in his study, for the doctors were still closeted together in the adjoining room. After half an hour, which Denison filled with feverish talk that troubled me, the doctors entered, and I received, at Denison's request, permission to remain. Heneage Mullins appeared to me a feeble, pompous person; but Saunders-Wright was a man of dignity and evident power, and delivered his opinion with gravity and decision. The case, he said, was highly complicated. But it resembled in all essential features another case which

he had successfully treated a year ago ; and he proposed to follow the same treatment in this as in that, with allowance made for a difference in age and sex. There was certainly congestion of the spinal cord ; there was acute inflammation of the pneumogastric nerve ; and a general hyper-tension of the arterial system, which was extremely difficult to deal with in conjunction with the other features of the case. Nevertheless he had confidence that good results would follow the treatment he had laid down. The prescription he had written out must be made up at once, and the first dose administered before the patient went to sleep. It contained a minute quantity of digitalis, and the most scrupulous care must be taken that the dose was exactly measured and timed according to the directions given. Would Professor Denison himself, or Mrs Denison (who was nursing her son), attend to this matter personally, for it was most important.

As soon as Saunders-Wright had satisfied himself that these and other instructions had been taken to heart he left the house, bidding Denison hope for good results.

Denison was immediately on the heights.

“At last,” he cried, “I feel that science has really got its grip on the evil. That man understands his business. Unless I’m much mistaken before many hours have passed we shall have the mischief under control.”

A servant was hastily summoned and the prescription dispatched to the chemist’s shop. I stayed with Denison till the bottle arrived, and I saw him measure and remeasure the dose. He appealed to me for confirmation, and I said that the quantity was exact. We then separated, he to go to the sick-chamber, I to return home.

Next morning Arnold Denison was dead.

A week after the funeral I found Denison walking up and down his capacious study in an agony of self-torment. “I’m entirely to blame,” he cried. “The poor boy’s death lies at my door. He might have been saved—easily, certainly. The initial mistake was the dismissal of Bathurst and Codrington. I ought to have given them more time—much more time. Their inability to cope immediately with the new symptoms was to be expected. They were waiting to make sure of their ground; they

would have had the disease under control in another week or ten days. They knew what they were about; and another consultation with Sir Gilbert Blair would inevitably have put them on the right track. To suppose that men who had overcome the paralysis should be unable to cope with its sequelæ—oh, it was madness, criminal madness!”

The next time I saw Denison he was hurrying down the street like a hunted man. The moment he caught sight of me he crossed the roadway and, before I could ask any questions, he seized my arm with both his trembling hands, begged me to come along with him, and began to speak with the utmost agitation. “I’ve just met Codrington driving in his carriage,” he said, “and he gave me a look which said as plainly as if he had shouted it down the street, ‘You’re the slayer of your son.’ And it’s true—demonstratively true. If I were arraigned for murder to-morrow I would plead guilty and go to the scaffold without complaint. Better men than Bathurst and Codrington—wiser men, more skilful men—are not to be found in Europe. Oskar Blom was a quack, and Mackay little better. The boy

was slipping through their fingers the whole time. And I didn't see it! Oh, my God, what a madman I have been! Even at the eleventh hour I might have saved him. How can I forgive myself for yielding to the advice of that poor creature, Heneage Mullins, when he pressed me to call in Saunders-Wright? I ought to have stood firm for Sir Thomas O'Flaherty. Sir Thomas has never lost a case; he saved the Vice-Chancellor, and he would have saved Arnold. I knew it was a mistake to send for Saunders-Wright. I acted against my own better judgment. Saunders-Wright is a mere microscopist, a theorist, a writer of medical books, without one-tenth the practical experience of O'Flaherty. The Vice-Chancellor called yesterday and said, 'Denison, if I had only known the facts in time, I should have advised you to call in O'Flaherty.' He might have spared me that—it cut me to the heart. But of course he didn't know—didn't know that I was fully cognisant of O'Flaherty's qualifications for the case—didn't know that I stood already condemned as a murderer in my own eyes!"

On another occasion he burst hurriedly into my rooms and began to speak almost

before he had closed the door: "By the way, you remember that I measured in your presence the first dose from the Saunders-Wright prescription. Are you absolutely sure the quantity was correct?" I said I was. "So is Mrs Denison, so is Adela, so is Margaret. Possibly the figures on the medicine glass were incorrectly marked. I must send it round to the chemist's to be tested. But no, it can't be that. The digitalis was infinitesimal, and Saunders-Wright assures me that even a triple dose would not have been fatal. No, no. It was my own weakness, my own want of decision, my own crass folly in not insisting on O'Flaherty. But the initial mistake was the worst. I can never bear to meet Codrington again. The sight of him is enough to kill me. I shall have to give up my work and live in another part of the country. The whole place rings with reproaches. Every time I see the Vice-Chancellor I shall remember that awful blunder about O'Flaherty."

It was no mere cloud of sorrow that the loss of his son brought into Denison's life. The event had dislocated the framework and weakened the underpinning of his whole mental and moral being. Little by little



his mind gave way. He completely lost his interest in his professional work; his lectures were all abroad, incoherent and pointless. He would stop in the middle of a sentence, stare fixedly out of the window for five minutes, and then resume without any consciousness of his lapse. He reproached himself incessantly. His conversation turned on one thing only. Despite his friends' efforts to keep him away from the dangerous subject he returned to it like a moth to the candle. He ate spasmodically and slept little. He talked and even walked in his sleep.

Of one terrible scene I was myself the witness. I had taken Denison to Brighton under express promise to his wife that I would not leave him night nor day. We slept in the same room, and waking from a doze in my arm-chair—for I dared not go to bed—I saw that Denison's place was empty. Instant search was made, and at last we found him fumbling with a telephone in the deserted office of the hotel. The moment he saw us he handed me the receiver. "Ring up O'Flaherty," he said, "and tell him it's life or death. I can't understand their voices; some one is speaking Greek"—

and here he babbled some strange words—  
“ Quick, quick ; he’s sinking fast ; there’s not a moment to lose. Thank God there’s no wind on the Irish Sea. O’Flaherty will reach Holyhead in good time. The engine of the night train has broken down. Tell Codrington not to go to bed ; O’Flaherty may be here any minute. We’ve sent the motor to fetch him. Tell the chauffeur to let her rip—I’ll be responsible. It’ll be quicker than the train. Oh, it’s the wrong man ! You’ve brought Saunders-Wright. My fault, my fault ! What’s your fee ? Fifty guineas. But you haven’t earned it. I knew you wouldn’t. Bathurst is pulling him through, and you can clear out. Oh my boy, my boy, not yet—not yet ! O’Flaherty’s coming and you’ll be all right. Five minutes more, O God, give him five minutes more and O’Flaherty will be here ! ”

A few months after this Denison resigned his post and retired into the country. Among the many good things he had taken part in promoting was the famous Clearing House for Great Ideas, a scheme known by many names both opprobrious and respectful. It had involved the actual

founding of a Settlement which Denison had helped to finance out of his own fortune. It was thought that by living on the spot, which was one of the most salubrious in England, he would revive his interest in the work, and would recover his health, now sorely shattered, in the fine air. Thither accordingly the family moved, taking up their residence in the spring of the year which followed Arnold's death.

From time to time I received from Mrs Denison accounts of her husband's condition. "Of course," she said, "he will never be the same again—none of us will. But the cloud is lifting; he talks of the trouble in quite a different strain. At the same time there are grounds for uneasiness; there is something strange in the manner of his recovery. You must visit us again, and I will tell you all. He will be glad to see you, for the society of this place is not altogether to his taste (it is entirely contrary to mine), and it will do him good to have a talk with you. Only—if you'll forgive the warning—you must be careful to keep him as far as possible from the dangerous topic."

The invitation was promptly accepted;

but before relating what ensued, I will tell the reader of the Settlement itself, of the part Denison played in its foundation, and of an earlier visit which I paid to that interesting place.

### III. THE TRAGEDY OF PROFESSOR DENISON

#### 2. THE REFORMERS' PARADISE—OR WHAT YOU WILL

“Between the time of the wind and the snow,  
All loathliest weeds began to grow,  
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,  
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,  
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,  
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes,  
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.”

THE Clearing House for Great Ideas, variously known as the School of the Prophets, the Reformers' Paradise, the New Settlement, the Republic of Genius, and Denison's Folly, had a definite location on the map, an actual embodiment in bricks and mortar, and a living population of men, women, and children. You will find it somewhere in the North of England, and may easily

identify it by its resemblance to a Garden City. It is planted in a salubrious spot; red-tiled houses with high gables and good gardens are dotted about; the wide roads are bordered with trees; beyond is a forest, and the farther background is a broken line of moors. Good sense and artistic taste are evident alike in the choice of the locality and the construction of the buildings. The inhabitants are numerous and strongly individualised; perhaps there is no other community of equal size in which you would encounter so great a variety of types. Here, too, are combined the various merits of a watering-place, a university, and a republic; and the Reformers' Paradise is probably the first institution in which these advantages have co-existed on an equal footing.

The Reformers' Paradise—let us call it so—was founded by a Professor; and in this respect also it is unique. Watering-places have often been founded by Professors, as every one knows who has made a tour of the German Baths; Universities also; and, of course, Republics, without number; but so far as I am aware no Paradise of one sort or another could

ever claim a professorial origin until Professor Denison took the matter in hand.

From his studies of the Past Denison had imbibed an unbounded confidence in the Future. He saw a vision of men marching to their chosen ends with the same firm step, the same measured pace, with which he himself had marched to his Professorship, to the writing of his *magnum opus*, to his position of trusted adviser to the Board of Education. He had published articles on the Future of Science, the Future of Religion, the Future of Democracy in Australia, the Future of Garden Cities, the Future of Universities—the Future of almost everything. And no reader of these articles could fail to see that the author knew what he was writing about. To Gabriel Denison, Professor of Sociology, the Future was an object of knowledge, in the same sense, if not in the same degree, as the Past. What could be more unscientific than the mental habit which, cutting Time into two halves at the present moment, assigns the half on the right to knowledge and the half on the left to ignorance? Time, surely, is all of a piece; the division between Past

and Future no more than an arbitrary sign ; and Science covers the whole.

There are some men, simple souls belike, who profess to find in the Unknowable the satisfaction of a primary need. The Unknowable without converses with the Unknowable within ; deep answers to deep ; and from the intercommunion of these two a light arises on the paths of knowledge and beauty falls on all the barren peaks of life. Mystery to these men is neither a burden nor a terror ; it is a congenial friend, nay, a twin-brother to their own souls ; they rejoice in its presence and kindle their highest purpose at its flame.

Not so Professor Denison. To him the Unknowable was an obstacle, a nuisance, a destroyer of values and a perpetual menace to life. By a supreme effort of philosophy he had virtually packed it off, bag and baggage, out of his thoughts, and it was a good riddance. To creep through life with a great hulking Surd towering above you, a thing that might at any moment fall on the top of all your schemes and crush you like a mouse in the furrow, this, in Denison's eyes, was the lot of every man who dallied with an Unknowable, the



dismal lot from which the light of Reason had delivered the human race. With the Secret of Evolution in one hand he was armed against all mysteries ; with the results of historical study in the other he had a tool for building the Future of Mankind. And he was full of schemes for that end ; for Denison was a lover of his kind and a son of his age.

Such was the soil from which, in the fulness of time, there grew up the Sensitive Plant of a New Idea. Was it sprung from the "insane root," which, if one digs deep enough, may be found dormant in the sub-soil of so many an ordered life ? I know not. Like other plants it took a ponderous name, as a "Scheme for Organising the Prophetical Instinct of the Race."

In an age whose keynote is Organisation, it seemed to Denison an anachronism that prophetical genius, the highest of human endowments, should alone remain unorganised. "Whence," he asked, "came the discord of the great voices, the contradictions, the warfare of ideals, and the vast waste of human hopes and efforts in their pursuit ? Came it not from the isolation of the Prophet ? Has not the Prophet been

ever a solitary, lacking sufficient contact with his fellows, often delivering as new a message which is old, and displaying by his fanatical one-sidedness all the defects of an individuality exaggerated by solitude and untempered by the attrition of other souls? Cast your eye over the past and you would see the Prophets arriving not in ordered ranks, but as single spies, strangers to one another; you would see them dotting the landscape of history—one here, another there—ungrouped and scattered, like church steeples on a countryside.”

As a student of history it was Denison's conviction that there had always been in the world more great ideals than the world knew what to do with; Progress had never been delayed by “teleological poverty” —by no means; the trouble lay rather in the haphazard occurrence of human inspirations; in the mutual aloofness of the inspired; in the want of any organised system for the education of idealists, whereby they might discover their natural affinities and the common import of their visions. All that was needed was to bring the prophets together, and a new synthesis of all the ideals would inevitably arise.

“A Congress of Religions,” he went on, “is no new thing; an Œcumenical Council of Idealists has been thought of many times, and partially accomplished more than once. Much good has issued from these efforts; mutual acquaintance has been made, and mutual respect promoted. The prophets of diverse faiths have read their scrolls in each other’s presence, and many a dark prejudice has disappeared. But the intimacies thus established are insufficient; the prophets separate, and each is apt to forget what manner of man his neighbour is. But why not push the effort a little further? What do you say to a Congress of Religions in permanent session; to a Standing Committee of all the Idealisms; or even to a University of the Sons of Progress pursuing its appointed labours in unbroken continuity from age to age? It is a great thing, no doubt, that the Christian, the Buddhist, the Mohammedan should meet once in a decennium in the hotels of Chicago, and listen to each other’s oratory in crowded halls. How much greater a thing would it be if these men could live for ten years in each other’s presence; if their wives and families could intermingle; if they could

work together as members of one community; educate their children in common schools; eat at each other's tables; play golf together; and perhaps occasionally worship in the same church. Extend your principle still further: multiply the particulars of its application. Sweep into your net the subdivisions as well as the main heads; congregate the sects; establish them in neighbourly relations; let the Hindu woman nurse the Christian's child; the High Churchman borrow the Nonconformist's wheelbarrow; the Theist and the Agnostic travel up to town by the same train. Let reformers of different schools look into each other's gardens, as well as read each other's articles; let the socialist help the individualist to mend his bicycle; let the suffragette and the anti-suffragist take counsel together in the growing of sweet peas. Have you not here the conditions from which a Unification of Reforming Tendencies must sooner or later result? Will not misunderstandings vanish like troops of frightened ghosts? The unity of human purpose will be discovered and announced. The warfare of ideals will cease. A Federal Republic of Great Ideas will rise like an

exhalation, and send forth united armies to conquer the world.”

I have been quoting the substance of Professor Denison's famous pamphlet on "The Education of the Prophet." This pamphlet, replete with historical knowledge and psychological analysis, and glowing, as all Denison's writings glowed, with confident anticipation, was launched upon a windless sea, where it lay and rolled for many months, with rotting sails and timbers, derided by the old and mistrusted by the young, as though it were some leaky ship. Nobody seemed impressed by Denison's appeal. The newspapers were frankly contemptuous. His friends regarded his pamphlet as a wild adventure, unworthy of a sober mind, and said behind his back that it would damage his reputation. The witty made fun of it, and the dullest could hardly refrain from a smile. The only encouragement Denison received came from a working miner in the county of Durham, who enclosed a postal order for half a crown to help in starting the scheme; and from a Welshman, emigrated to Patagonia, who said that the same ideas had occurred to him while tending his flocks on the Pampas,

invoked the blessings of heaven on the head of Denison, and apologised for his bad English, which language, he said, he had not spoken for five years.

“Once during his lifetime,” said a reviewer of the pamphlet, “every great man may be allowed, and indeed is expected to go mad. We therefore welcome Professor Denison’s scheme as one more proof, if more proof were needed, that he is a great man. But we welcome it in no other sense, and would gladly avoid the duty of welcoming it even in this. Valued on intrinsic merit, we have no hesitation in saying that Professor Denison’s scheme is worth considerably less than nothing. The word ‘silly’ summarises our comment on every page. . . . Were an attempt made to put the scheme into operation it could have no other result than to gather into one locality all the mad men and mad women whom our imperfect Lunacy Laws suffer to be at large. Professor Denison’s School of the Prophets would be a community of cranks. Such a community would be a menace to any decent neighbourhood, unless, as is not unlikely, the ‘Prophets’ spent their energies in metaphorically, or perhaps literally,

knocking one another on the head. We hope Professor Denison will not omit to make provision in his scheme for a strong force of police on the spot: it might even be well to choose the locality in the neighbourhood of a garrison town. We commend to the learned author a brief announcement which appeared in a recent issue of the *Calcutta Herald*; it ran as follows:— ‘A new saint has just appeared in the Punjaub: *the police are after him.*’ This gentleman will doubtless be one of the first to respond to the Professor’s hospitable invitation. We hope that his remarkable pamphlet will not escape the notice of the Indian Police, and of their efficient allies in Scotland Yard. It will aid them in tracing the whereabouts of gentlemen who are ‘wanted.’ ”

Denison may have been disappointed, but he was not surprised. He told me that he had expected a cold reception. “But history proves,” he said, “that the schemes which succeed to-morrow are those which were laughed at yesterday. It will be so in this instance; mark my words that it will; and I am going to peg away. The scheme answers an actual need; it has a

rational foundation; and is bound to come to its own in due course."

Things were in this posture when one day Denison received the following letter. The envelope bore the imprint of "Rodright & Co., Limited," and was marked "strictly confidential."

"SIR,—Having seen in the *Times* a notice of your book, 'The Education of the Prophet,' and having noted the unfavourable remarks of the reviewer, I ordered a copy from my bookseller forthwith, and read it in the intervals of my business; for, though a business man, as you are aware, I don't allow my mind to get rusty, and I do a good bit of reading at odd times. Being a self-made man from the first, I have had a deal of opposition to contend with in my time, and my experience is that the biggest money is in the things that are most blown on when they're started. I write to say that you've no cause to be downhearted from what that writer says about your book. If I'd listened to people like him my firm wouldn't be there. But I never did listen to them, and I advise you to do the same. I've read your scheme and I tell you, as one man of experience to another, that with money and brains it's a working proposition. I see



by your way of writing that you're a man of brains, and so am I, in a manner of speaking, though self-educated. But brains won't work your scheme without money and, as I dare say you've heard, I've got a bit laid by. Professor Denison, you'll want money, make no mistake about that. You come to me and talk it over, and I'll take the opportunity to show you over our Works, which will convince you that I've done some hard things in my time. We'll think it out together. I've been a supporter of Education for many years, but only when the lines are thoroughly up-to-date, holding as I do that Education wants altering from top to bottom. Mind, I promise nothing, but if your scheme bears further inquiry I'm not the man to see a good idea hung up for want of a five-pound note, nor for ten thousand-pound notes for the matter of that.

“I may say your name has been known to me for many years. Your book on Etruscan Civilisation is in my office library, and I shall be glad to have your opinion on a line of Etruscan vases which our firm is about to place on the market.

“I will also take this opportunity of thanking you for your past kindness to my son Schliemann, so named after the great discoverer, and I only wish he had taken your advice. I regret to say that he has been captured by brigands near Smyrna, and

they're asking £20,000 for his ransom, as no doubt you have seen from the papers. Perhaps it will teach him a lesson. He needs it; but the brigands won't get that £20,000 from *me*.—I am, dear Sir, your obedient servant,

“PETER RODRIGHT.”

When Rodright and Denison began to work together there came into being one of those rare combinations of human force before which the word “impossible” shrinks into a meaningless term. The daring, the imagination, the iron will of the one; the intellectual schematism, the sustained thinking, the sweet reasonableness of the other, had no sooner organised themselves into a common purpose than the impracticable became the easy; difficulties vanished like smoke; the sun and the moon did obeisance; the rooted mountains stirred in their seats and the little hills began to skip like rams. The Republic of Genius, scoffed at by the wise as the dream of a disordered brain, became a thing in being. The Settlement was founded; the business management was in the hands of Rodright; the selection of applicants was left to Denison; the scheme was advertised in every civilised

country of three continents; and in two years every house in the Settlement had been applied for five times over and the capital invested was yielding four per cent.

On this latter point Rodright was absolutely uncompromising. "Professor," he said to Denison, "this 'ere scheme has got to pay, and don't you forget it. No glorified failures for me, Sir; I don't believe in 'em. I tell you it's *got* to pay. If it doesn't, then it's not wanted. There's no other test—not in these days. And we'll make it pay, by giving the public a downright good article. What did you say in your pamphlet—'The scheme answers to one of the deepest needs of the present age.' Is that true or false? True. Very well; then there's four per cent. in it to begin with and ten later on. Don't you let yourself be humbugged about that. No; we're not out for making money this time; but we're going to make it all the same. It's the *test*. And what we make we'll put into the Settlement, and make more."

Rodright and Denison formed, as I have said, a powerful combination. But it was not omnipotent. True, they lifted the mountain from its seat, and the scoffers

were humbled; but the mountain toppled perversely and fell into the wrong sea.

One night, about a year after Rodright's death, Denison came to my rooms looking unusually depressed and anxious. I thought at once of his domestic trouble; for this was the time when the dark shadow began to creep over his life. His eldest son was dangerously ill, as we have seen, and for months past Denison had been a stricken man.

"How is the boy?" I said.

"Oh, slightly better. At least we hope so; though past disappointments have been so many that one hardly dares to hope. But troubles, they say, never come alone. The fact is I've been greatly worried of late about the Settlement. A chief supporter of the scheme, a person whose name has never been made public, died some time ago, and things have been going wrong ever since. Not financially; on that score we are safe. But you must know that all along we have had to deal with much fraud and misrepresentation on the part of people applying for admission. The selection has been in the hands of the Committee of

which I am chairman ; but the lists were always privately submitted for ratification to the person to whom I have just referred. So long as he lived none but genuine idealists were admitted ; for he had an extraordinary insight into character and a sure instinct for the detection of pretenders. Some day I will tell you his story. However, I am sorry to say that since his death the Selection Committee has made some serious mistakes. I am afraid, also, that my own judgment has been impaired of late. We have accepted the credentials presented to us without sufficient inquiry into the actual intentions of the applicants. The consequence is that we have been deceived ; and now there are rocks ahead. But the story is too long to tell you now. Come down for a week-end to the Settlement and I will explain the situation on the spot."

One lovely afternoon late in June I was seated with Professor Denison on the veranda of his pleasant house in the Settlement. He was not then in permanent residence ; but the working of the scheme absorbed much of his time and required his frequent presence. A small house had been reserved

for his occupation ; and here he spent his vacations and much of his leisure time.

The *mise en scène* was altogether agreeable, the air fine, the landscape majestic, and the very newness of the immediate surroundings was beautiful, for it was suggestive of youth and hope. On every side lay well-cultivated gardens, full of the season's flowers ; people of all ages passed to and fro in the roads, and many distinguished faces were to be seen. I congratulated Denison.

“ Yes,” he said, “ it's not altogether a failure, and yet not altogether a success. We've suffered a grievous loss by the death of my old friend and adviser—of whom I will tell you more presently. It was his hand that held the wheel, and I doubt if we shall ever find another to replace him. Frankly, I'm puzzled about the place, and I doubt whether it will ultimately fulfil my ideal. The fact is, the Settlement is filling up with cranks and extremists, as the reviewers predicted it would. A perfect Devil's Dance of strange opinions is going on. Some of these are interesting—very valuable indeed ; but others are not exactly desirable. It's a curious

place, and very different from what I expected."

"Let us hope that your presence among them will be the means of these people learning common sense," I said.

"I'm not hopeful," he answered. "They are a stiff-necked and intractable lot. And at present they are too busy with internecine quarrels to listen to anything I may have to say. Every man's hand is against his brother, and several acts of violence have been committed already. Notice, for example, those men now passing the gate"—and he pointed to two turbaned Orientals. "Those," he went on, "are Indian Yogis. We discovered too late that both of them have been in prison, and that they've been hunted out of several towns in the North. Only last week three men came over from Huddersfield and horsewhipped the Yogis until one of them fainted. However, the younger man—the one who received the severest chastisement—is a learned and interesting person. He holds weekly séances for the study of the Upanishads, several of which I have attended. By the way it would be worth your while to drop in with me to-morrow night—that is, if the Yogi is

sufficiently recovered to resume. His command of English and his powers of exposition are amazing.”

“ I suppose,” I said, “ that you have your full share of religious cranks in the community ? ”

“ Yes, there are at least five brand-new religions, which I intend to study when I can find time. Some of the inventors live next door to one another, and, as you may imagine, they are not on the best of terms.

“ Then, of course, we have the sex-problem represented in half a dozen forms—an odious subject, which can never be discussed without leading to pruriency. *Guard' e passa!* The occupant of the house immediately to your right is Mrs Gwendoline Hooley, the great advocate of Free Love—you know her record—who is constantly dropping her pamphlets into my letter-box. Oddly enough our neighbours on the left are the Eli Pratts, the leaders of the London ‘Futurists,’ whose motto is, ‘No-Love-at-All.’<sup>1</sup> I believe that, so far as morality

<sup>1</sup> “ Then Signor Marinetti came to the influence of women on life, and his voice rose with passion as he denounced the place of woman in history, the evil blight of that ‘romantic love’ of which she has been the object through the centuries. This romantic love, he said, has been a poison in which all the



goes, there isn't a pin to choose between the Pratts on the left and Madame Hooley on the right."

"I would rather hear about the new religions," I said. "The other thing doesn't interest me one little bit. It's abominably stale."

"Our new religions are so numerous," said he, "that nothing short of a month's residence in the Settlement will suffice to acquaint you with them all. But suppose we make a selection. What do you say to the Cult of Failure, the Cult of Nothing, the Cult of the Sacred Rat, and the Cult of our Noble Selves?"

vice of men has been bred. The woman of beauty . . . has been the infamous woman of the Bible of whom young men were bidden to beware. Her snake-like coils have crushed and choked the noblest ideals of manhood. Poets and painters and artists of every kind have been seduced by its evil spell, and modern life in all its aspects is made foul by this romanticism. 'We must get free of this infamous womanhood,' cried Signor Marinetti, gazing fiercely at the ladies of the Lyceum Club, who smiled at him. The Futurist, he declared, will put the love of woman away from him. His machine will be his mistress. The grand ideals of mechanical progress will influence his heart. He will become more like a machine himself. . . . Perhaps the time will come when men may do without women altogether, and when the human race may be continued by mechanical means. To the Futurist this is the one grand hope." —Signor Marinetti's address to the Lyceum Club, reported in the *Daily Chronicle*, 14th December 1910.

“It’s a rather mixed lot,” I answered, “but I dare say it will prove fairly representative. However, you can clear the ground by dismissing the Cult of Nothing. I’ve met the members of that denomination many times and under many names; and I’ve found them a trifle dull. Begin with the Sacred Rat; that sounds much more interesting, at all events more concrete. But surely of that, too, I have heard before; possibly as existing among the Australian aborigines.”

“Most of us are aboriginal in the Settlement,” he answered, with a smile, “and some of us, especially the most advanced, are even prehistoric. But this religion does not come from Australia. You are probably confusing it with another. There is a gentleman here who possesses an Australian “bull-roarer” which he whirls while standing on his doorstep every Sunday morning—it can be heard two miles away, and makes a dreadful noise—as a means of summoning the faithful to prayers. But I have forgotten for the moment what particular denomination he represents. Probably you are thinking of him.”

“Perhaps so,” I said; “but I am eager

to hear about the Sacred Rat.<sup>1</sup> Please proceed.”

#### THE CULT OF THE SACRED RAT

“ Know, then, that there lives in the Settlement the widow of a lately deceased millionaire named Rodright who was engaged for many years in the idol-trade—a branch of modern industry of which you have probably heard. Rodright was undoubtedly a genius. He was also a humorist of the first water; his business was a pure Comedy from beginning to end, perhaps the chief Comedy of modern times; and he conducted it as such, revelling in the fun of it, and laughing incessantly at himself. The man had trouble in his private life—his three sons had turned out wastrels—and this inclines me to think that the Comedy was genuine; for genuine humour, in my opinion, is always an exhalation from dark waters. I knew him well and loved him deeply. Though externally he was vulgar enough, and entirely self-taught, his heart was in the right place, and he was the

<sup>1</sup> “The Rat and Mouse Revelation.” Emerson: *Essay on Worship*. This is what I must have been thinking of.

most valuable friend I ever had in the prosecution of my educational work. It was he who took with me the leading part in the foundation of this Settlement.

“On the death of Rodright the widow came to reside in a big house on the outskirts of the Settlement, which they had occasionally occupied during the lifetime of her husband. The widow is a woman of a low type of intelligence, violent and ignorant, and the victim of innumerable delusions. She is known to have been a sore trouble to Rodright.

“When the old man passed into the next world, his joking propensities, apparently, did not forsake him. His widow had long been associated with the worst forms of spiritualism; and the discarnate Rodright began at once to take advantage of her gullibility with a view to business, thereby giving a striking proof of his identity. Mrs Rodright was in the hands of a medium—I think he called himself a Mahatma as well—whom the beneficent laws of our country have so far failed to put under lock and key. This fellow had a long head, and laid his plans with the care of a general conducting an elaborate siege. When the

ground had been thoroughly prepared, a number of messages were rapped out to the widow about 'Egypt' and a certain 'Rat.' 'The Rat will bring peace and plenty to the world.' 'The Rat will save England from the Radicals.' 'The Rat will guard the business now I am gone.' 'They have been seeking the Rat for thousands of years; you will find him; keep him and honour him.'

"These messages were continued off and on for months. The old lady spent her time going from one medium to another in the hope of obtaining further elucidation of the mysterious words. But the original medium was careful to keep his secret to himself, and though the others produced scores of messages from the deceased man, no mention was made by them of the Rat. Mrs Rodright had indeed given them a cue by repeatedly asking questions about the Rat; but of this the other mediums could make nothing, the answers they returned always containing the word 'Hat' instead of 'Rat'—a clever stroke, inasmuch as this was supposed to refer to a well-known saying of old Rodright's about the size of his great head, but entirely apart from the matter in hand.

“The thing having gone on sufficiently long to reduce the silly woman to a state of extreme mental distress, the original medium judged the time ripe for further developments. Accordingly there came a day when the old lady received a big letter from Egypt, registered, and closed with an enormous seal. The writer said that he addressed himself to Mrs Rodright in consequence of a remarkable vision. The vision had occurred in the course of a prolonged fast, undertaken, he affirmed, in fulfilment of a religious vow, when he had fallen asleep from exhaustion under the shadow of the Great Sphinx. Then followed the details of a long and complicated dream in which there had appeared the figure of an old man, with lofty brow, white beard, etc.—evidently the deceased Rodright. This vision had enjoined the sleeper to inform Mrs Rodright of a wonderful discovery that had just been made on the banks of the Nile—to wit, a living Rat, which had been asleep in the tomb since its erection at a date slightly subsequent to the creation of the world. According to an inscription on the inner walls of the tomb the Rat was an Incarnation of the Demiurge (Mrs Rod-

right had to look this up in the Dictionary), which was confirmed by the fact that an earthquake had shaken the whole country at the moment the Sacred Animal opened its eyes. In consequence of the command laid upon the writer by the Vision, which as a religious man he felt he couldn't disobey, he was willing to sell the Rat to Mrs Rodright for £4000.

“The old lady, on receiving this letter, went straight to the medium, and a séance was held forthwith. For some time no decisive result could be obtained, the medium alleging that he was under the influence of hostile spirits. The séance was about to conclude in disappointment when the table began to dance about the room like a thing possessed, and the medium, who had been speaking in half a dozen different voices, suddenly reproduced the tones of Rodright, called the widow by various pet names, sang a whole new verse of Greenland's Icy Mountains, in which Rat was made to rhyme with Hat, and ended up with a precise injunction to the widow to buy the Sacred Animal for the sum demanded. ‘It's Buried Treasure,’ said the spirit; ‘there's big money in it.’

“The séance concluded, Mrs Rodright

immediately drove to her Bankers and arranged that drafts for £4000 should be sent to the writer of the letter—£400 as a deposit, the balance on arrival of the Rat.

“ Well, to cut a long story short, the Rat—a most villainous specimen of its tribe and as black as night—arrived in due course in charge of a Cinghalese half-breed, picked up by the sender in Port Said. The Cinghalese, having been well posted in the business, proved himself a most capable emissary. He tamed the Rat during the voyage, teaching it all sorts of tricks; and managed to arm himself with a whole literature of cryptic utterances from the Sacred Books of the East, which put the authenticity of the Demiurge beyond the shadow of a doubt. The new god is now installed in a golden cage, and receives the old lady’s prayers night and morning, a trick which the Cinghalese had taught him to perform to perfection.”

“ Denison,” said I, when he had done, “ some element of poetical justice seems to be involved in that story.”

But at this moment Mrs Denison appeared on the veranda, followed by a maid with a silver teapot, a copper tripod, a flaming



lamp, and all the rubric of Tea. Mrs Denison drew me aside.

“What has my husband been talking about?” she asked.

“The new religions at the Settlement.”

“Good! Keep him to that, if you can. I was afraid he might have been talking about our boy—Arnold. That trouble is preying on his mind in a way that alarms me.”

“He has not alluded to Arnold,” I said.

“Don’t let him—on any account. If he mentions the subject, do your best to turn his mind into another channel.”

Denison handed me a cigar and I found a cue.

“We shall now have incense,” I said, “for the Worship of our Noble Selves. Let me hear about that religion while the scent of this cigar is fresh on the evening air.”

#### THE WORSHIP OF OUR NOBLE SELVES

“This cult,” said Denison, “is a derivative product from the Worship of Divine Posterity, and its origin forms an interesting episode in the History of Modern Religions. The facts are rather complicated, but if you

will be patient for five minutes I will try to disentangle them.

“Observe yonder building with the cupola, among the trees. That is the Church for the worship of Divine Posterity. This denomination is, in its turn, an offshoot from the Society for the Production of the Superman.

“Until recently the Church of the Divine Posterity has been exceedingly prosperous. But difficulties arose from an unexpected quarter. An individual claiming to be the Superman—an advance copy, I suppose, of Divine Posterity—arrived in the Settlement and attached himself to the Church. His airs of superiority towards the Men and the Inframen were, however, so offensive, and his general manners so abominable, that a movement was set on foot to ‘prevent the arrival of the Superman before his time.’ It was thought that the trouble was due not to any vice or want of good breeding in this particular Superman, but to the accident, for which he was in no sense responsible, that people were not yet ready for him.

“Out of this incident a series of highly complicated questions have arisen

which, I am afraid, are likely to wreck the Church of the Divine Posterity.

“In the first place the question was raised whether the Superman, on arriving, would be conscious of his own Superhumanity; in other words, would Divine Posterity worship Itself—which was what the advance copy had too evidently done—or, if not, what would it worship?

“A sermon on this subject was recently preached in the Church, which I had the good fortune to hear. The preacher held that only such Supermen as came before their time would be able to recognise themselves *as such*, the truth being inevitably forced on their observation by comparison with the common types around them. But this difficulty could be met by delaying the march of progress until the vast majority of the human race could attain Superhumanity at one and the same moment; in which event the attention of Superindividuals would not be attracted to, or at least not concentrated upon, their own superiority. The preacher admitted that the difficulty might return if *other people* were to inform the Supermen of their true condition. But this again, he said, might be met by a general

understanding that the arrival of the Divine Posterity, when first observed, should be guarded as a State Secret ; and by a resolution on the part of sporadic Supermen to treat any leakage of information as though it were not true. These propositions established, the preacher at once laid down the corollary that Divine Posterity, being ignorant of its own Divinity, could not possibly worship Itself. What then would it worship ? By a process of elimination the position was finally reached that Posterity would address its devotion to those noble labourers in the past who had prepared the way for its own arrival on the planet—*namely, to themselves, the members of that Church.* The preacher wound up with a splendid peroration in which he pointed the finger of his eloquence to that glorious future when the present congregation, who had borne so many scoffs for their worship of Posterity, would themselves have become the object of Posterity's worship.

“ This sermon gave rise to a fierce controversy and ultimately to a twofold schism. One party maintained that by the showing of the preacher the true logical outcome of the worship of Posterity was the worship

of Ancestors, and charged the orthodox section with cowardice in not facing the consequence of their principles. The preacher of the sermon has himself embraced this view, and already taken steps to establish the Worship of Ancestors as a thing in being.

“The other schism has been made by a group of young men who announce that they are going to practise the Worship of Their Noble Selves.

“The argumentation of these young men is subtle, and, I think you must admit, conclusive. Their motto is a parody of a saying of Spinoza’s and runs as follows: ‘The worship wherewith Posterity is going to worship Us is the worship wherewith We intend to worship Ourselves.’ You will observe that this principle is two-edged, and tells equally against the Cult of Posterity on the one hand and the Cult of Ancestors on the other. As against the former the young men argue that ‘if it is right for Posterity to worship Us after We are dead, it must at least be equally right for Us to worship Ourselves while We are living’: as against the other, that ‘if our Ancestors had known that We were going to worship

them, they would never have been so deficient in shrewdness as not to pay themselves, while they were living, the honours which would be due from Us after they were dead.' To suppose otherwise is to suppose that our ancestors were fools, thereby disqualifying them as objects of worship and basing the cult on a contradiction in terms. Instead, therefore, of practising the worship of Humanity either past or future these young men now proclaim it a higher duty *to arouse in present Humanity the consciousness that it is being worshipped*, which consciousness, they say, is the psychological equivalent for the Worship of Ourselves."

"This is a very old religion," I said, "especially among young men. It usually comes to grief, however, or at least begins to degenerate, when the young men take to worshipping Each Other's Sisters."

"Yes, I'm told that several of these apostasies have already occurred among the neophytes; for the young men, being broad-minded, admitted the Sisters to membership in the Church, with the result that some confusion has arisen in the Person of their deity. The leader is a good-looking youth from Oxford, named Harriman. Indeed he's

a young Apollo, and reminds me not a little of my own boy——”

“Denison,” I said, interrupting him, “these cigars of yours are detestable, fit to be smoked only in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.”

Denison was a fastidious judge of cigars, and had given me one of his best. Obviously nettled, he snapped out, “If you have any cotton-wool in your pocket you had better smoke that.”

I thought I had gained my object; but I was unwilling to sacrifice a good cigar, and eager to keep him to his narrative.

“My remark was only a reminiscence,” I said. “Your mention of Harriman reminded me of an American Professor of the same name, and I was merely repeating a classical remark he once made about the quality of my own cigars. Yours are the antithesis. Pray continue the list of your Prophets.”

Denison flashed a keen eye upon me, and I saw that I was found out. Not that I greatly cared; for I could see that he was struggling with a climbing sorrow, and I was determined to repress it at any cost. But this proved a difficult matter; and the very

next turn of the conversation undid the results of my last attempt.

“I must tell you about the Cult of Failure,” he said—“one of our most promising movements.”

“Leave that aside,” I interposed, scenting danger. “I know that denomination well, and would rather hear of something new.” But he was not to be put off.

“Let your friends who worship Failure come to our Settlement,” he went on, “and we can furnish them with a philosophy of their religion, a ritual, a priesthood, and a liturgy set to music in the minor key. This religion has been invented with the object of counteracting the modern worship of Success. The inventor is a friend of mine. Perhaps I ought to be one of his followers myself.”

I tried to create another shock, for Denison’s mouth was trembling; but I was not quick enough to break the flow of his speech.

“The inventor no doubt is a lunatic; but so are we all until we have suffered, and some of us afterwards. Was I not mad myself until——”

At this moment Fortune came to my assistance.



## HYGIENE AT THE SETTLEMENT

“Great heavens!” I cried, glad of a diversion. “Who are those people?”

An extremely handsome man and woman, followed by three children, all arrayed in the costume of the Early Greeks, were crossing the road.

“That,” replied Denison, “is one of the most gifted and charming men in the Settlement—Professor Madovitch of Bukharest, who, you may remember, was expelled by the Roumanian Government for complicity in some political plot. The family has adopted the Greek costume, as you see, which Madovitch claims to be hygienically perfect. Probably he’s right. The trouble is that the entire household, when within doors, wear no clothes at all. Madovitch has a theory about beneficent earth-currents which can do their work only when the body is in a state of nudity. He was good enough to call upon me when I came, and, not knowing his domestic habits, my wife and I returned the call last week. We barely escaped a catastrophe. Madovitch was expecting a recent convert to his opinions, and was about to open the door, in *puris naturalibus*, when

Madame Madovitch caught sight of us from a window, and just managed to fling sheets over the family in the nick of time. Ask Mrs Denison to tell you the story. The details of it are charming. However, in spite of his oddities, I mean to cultivate Madovitch. He is really a most enlightened person, and a great scholar."

"Hygienic fads are sure to be well represented in a place like this," I said.

"Oh yes. The majority of our cranks are of that sort. Why, we have quite a little colony of the Pello-ptusmatists. They claim to have effected thousands of cures, and some are really remarkable. On the whole, our crank-cures are worth study. There's one man here who has certainly got hold of a very good thing. By the way, if I had only known of it a month ago——"

I purposely tilted my chair over, and it fell with a crash against the balcony.

"You're not hurt, I hope?" cried Denison, as he helped me to rise.

"Not in the least. It was the chair that got the blow, not I. But, I say, what on earth is that fellow doing in yonder garden?"

A bony individual, swathed in a big towel,

was busy in the middle of his lawn with a thing which I took at first for a Japanese screen. Presently the apparatus assumed the form of a cubical box with canvas sides and a round hole in the upper surface. Into this box the operator introduced a chair, under which he placed a spirit-lamp. He then lit the lamp, seated himself on the chair, thrust his head through the hole in the top, and closed in the sides of the box. I now saw that it was a Cabinet Turkish Bath.

Denison laughed. "That fellow," he said, "is a great enthusiast, and very troublesome to boot. He believes that the Kingdom of Heaven is to be introduced by means of Turkish Baths, and has received the name of 'Old Pores.' Old Pores gives his neighbours no peace day nor night. It would be a great relief to all of us if Providence would gently melt him into vapour inside his bath. He's convinced that Parliament ought to introduce a Bill making Turkish Baths compulsory on every person over eight years of age, and he went round the constituencies at the last election heckling candidates until at last somebody broke his head. You can see the plaster on it now. He spends hours every day exactly as you see him, no matter

what the weather may be. He's a great crony of his next-door neighbour, who argues with him as he sits in his bath. There he is leaning over the garden wall."

A tall man with a very high forehead had appeared in the next garden. Before many minutes had elapsed the two men were engaged in a heated argument. The man at the wall was gesticulating wildly, in which I thought he had an unfair advantage over his opponent, who could merely wag and turn his head, and try to make good by shouting what he was unable to effect by gesture.

"The man at the wall," I said, "seems sceptical at present about the Turkish Bath. Or perhaps he is only in the first stage of conversion. It will be interesting on my next visit to observe his progress in the faith."

"He'll get no further," said Denison. "The man at the wall is the apostle of a totally different creed, and there's no common ground of argument. Old Pores is arguing that you can save humanity only by cleaning their outsides; the man at the wall answers him that you can save humanity only by putting dirt into their insides."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

“He of the wall,” said Denison, “has a philosophy which he professes to derive from Pythagoras and from the Indians of South America.<sup>1</sup> He holds that Life consists in a certain balance of the terrestrial elements; which balance can be maintained in perfection by the simple plan of eating a teaspoonful of garden soil after every meal. He practises what he preaches, and you may see him do it to-night after he has had his supper. Hearing that I was suffering from nervous strain, he came to offer me advice the other day, and assured me that he fully expected, barring accidents, to reach the age of one hundred and eighty years.”

The argument between the two apostles had meanwhile increased in vehemence, and scraps of it floated across the road. I took out a notebook and pencil, and captured such of the flying leaves as came my way. The following is a careful transcript of the gist of the collection :—

#### THE LOGIC OF HEALTH—IN SCRAPS

*Old Pores.*—“—three millions of pores to every square inch of human—each one an out-

<sup>1</sup> See Bates, *A Naturalist on the Amazons*, p. 258 (Murray's edition).

let for the earthy and an inlet for the heavenly—vital fluid of the cosmos has no other means of finding—new-born babe—Wordsworth's Ode—scientific justification——”

*Dirt-eater.*—“—having swallowed it, you take seven deep breaths in order that earth and air may attain that proper——”

*Old Pores.*—“—to whom the daily bath was a religion—and therefore the Roman Eagles conquered the world—if Great Britain would maintain her present position——”

*Dirt-eater.*—“—so that the solar plexus may act evenly round its middle point and the digestive fluids held back until——”

*Old Pores.*—“—as Aristotle said, you can't——”

*Dirt-eater.*—“—in his last pamphlet has produced seven instances which prove conclusively——”

*Old Pores.*—“—made to give the rational soul supremacy over——”

*Dirt-eater.*—“—Aristotle—inversion of the true order—as every physiologist——”

*Old Pores.*—“—was exploded long ago—plainest facts——”

*Dirt-eater.*—“—three distinct kinds of Nile-mud inside the body of an Egyptian mummy—instruction deciphered by—reached the

age of one hundred and seventy-two years—priest of—bricks without straw are now known to have been intended for use at the table—Higher Criticism—Professor Mac—has discovered—probably cakes of soft——”

*Old Pores.*—“—worship of Isis—Osiris—crocodiles basking in the sun—represents the feeling of comfort after taking a——”

*Dirt-eater.*—“—manna in the wilderness—learnt the secret in Egypt—Professor Lügenwohl of Jena has identified—Elijah—the raven has been proved to be the symbol of the black earth found in the neighbourhood of—Palestine Exploration—conclusive——”

*Old Pores.*—“—serpent in the Garden of Eden—connected with Babylonian Sweat-myth—tree of knowledge—original sin comes out—perspiration—no doubt Moses deliberately concealed it from the Hebrews because the Canaanites——”

*Dirt-eater.*—“—the Ancient Germans, as Tacitus says——”

*Old Pores.*—“—daily regeneration of the entire moral nature——”

*Dirt-eater.*—“—begging the whole question—unless the solar plexus is evenly balanced there is no moral nature to——”

*Old Pores.*—"—at a political meeting—  
thrown downstairs—concussion—bath—in-  
ner tranquillity—next day—two lectures—  
seventeen miles—what does Goethe say——"

*Dirt-eater.*—"—martyr to—when I met—  
and never since that day——"

*Old Pores.*—"—no argument—why, if you  
hadn't——"

*Dirt-eater.*—"—first principles of reason-  
ing—total ignorance—prove a negative—  
why, man—and you a Bachelor of Science  
of—believed that any person with a  
pretence——"

*Old Pores.*—"—total misapprehension of  
the elementary laws of——"

*Dirt-eater.*—"—demonstrated beyond all  
dispute that the vital fluid——"

*Old Pores.*—"—bosh—why—Moloch—the  
late Lord Derby—Ralph Waldo Trine——"

At this point both men began shouting  
together and I found it impossible to dis-  
entangle their utterances. I gathered they  
were quoting authorities, or abusing them,  
and I managed to catch the names of  
Confucius, Mohammed, Hegel, Absolute Fool,  
Impostor, Huxley, Sir Oliver Lodge, Michael  
Angelo, and one which, though often re-  
peated, seemed difficult to pronounce; it



sounded like "Uncle Pocket-knife," and so appears in my phonetic notes.

"The Dirt-eater will die of appendicitis in twelve months," I said.

"Poor fellow, so he will," answered Denison. "He's had several warnings already, the only effect of which has been to make him take a double dose of dirt. What fools we men are! But, after all, his folly is no greater than my own. Why, when Dr. Bathurst told me——"

"What's that sound?" I cried. "Bless my soul, if there isn't a procession coming down along the road." And I ran to the other end of the balcony, as though to get a better view.

"There's no procession," said Denison. "Such things are unknown here. In this place you couldn't get up a procession of more than one person at a time."

"But I can hear distinctly the beating of a big drum," I said, "and it's coming nearer every moment."

Again, to my joy, Denison laughed. "Wait and see," he said. "You'll find my last remark confirmed in a moment. It's a procession of one man."

As he spoke an enormously fat man with

a crimson face, streaming with perspiration, came into view down one of the side roads. He was dressed in flannels and a blazer, and was bareheaded. He came striding along at a great pace; and as he strode he flung out his fists to the full length of his long arms, and then brought them down in regular cadence and with resounding whacks on the pit of his capacious stomach. At each step an arm shot out, the right arm keeping time with the left leg and the left with the right, and the blows fell on his stomach with the regularity of the pendulum in a grandfather's clock. The man passed rapidly down the road, and the booming died away in the distance.

I laughed to suffocation. Even the grave Denison was convulsed.

“And now for the explanation,” I gasped, as soon as the power of speech returned.

“The drummer,” said Denison, “is President of the League of New Gorillas. He is one of the kindest-hearted and best-natured creatures God ever made. Why such a man should be chosen as the victim of that particular mania, the powers above may tell you. He made his fortune as a contractor, and it seems that on retiring from business some years ago he travelled abroad,

visiting Austria-Hungary among other places—for what reason I know not. You may have heard of Professor Thierstecher of Vienna and of his investigations into the habits of the larger apes. He professes to have discovered the secret which explains the peculiar drumming noise that gorillas are said to make when wandering in the tropical forest. Thierstecher's theory, which I believe to be entirely baseless, is that the gorilla drums its fists upon its belly for the purpose of promoting digestion. As a matter of fact I believe the gorilla strikes not its belly, but its chest. Well, some quack-scoundrel in Austria got hold of the idea, and now professes to cure every species of dyspepsia by a course of 'Bauch-trömmeln.' He has set up a school for the purpose in Budapest, where, for an exorbitant fee, you may be taught the whole theory and art.<sup>1</sup> He preys chiefly on gourmandisers and

<sup>1</sup> "Several years ago a medical man in New York attained so high a reputation for the cure of dyspepsia that he had no difficulty in obtaining a fee of five hundred dollars for each case he undertook, payable in advance. His patients were bound by solemn oath not to reveal his mode of treatment; but after his death scores of them considered themselves freed from the obligation and published the secret, which mainly consisted in slapping the stomach, etc."—*The Doctor at Home*, by George Black, M.B., p. 441.

gluttons, who are numerous everywhere, and is said to have agencies in most of the cities of Europe, whose business it is to find out that class of persons and supply him with their names and addresses. Thierstecher, who is a medical man, has gone into partnership with the quack, and the two villains are reaping an enormous harvest. They undertake to bring you, by a month's course of treatment, to such a state of digestive vigour that you can eat everything and anything, and as much of both as you please. They have actually founded a Society called 'The League of New Gorillas,' and the thing has recently slopped over into England. The man you have just seen is President of the London Branch."

"Well," said I, "it's a harmless cure anyhow, provided the patient is careful not to hit himself too hard; and I dare say that our fat friend's methods, by promoting laughter in other people, will ultimately do something to improve the digestion of mankind."

"Yes," said Denison, "and I wish all our cranks were as harmless as the last. Some of them are almost unspeakable. There's a scoundrel here who pretends to have found a remedy for the impending race-

failure of the Western world. He goes about the country giving lectures, and preaching that it is the duty of every man to have a hundred and twenty children. A more egregious blackguard never lived, and I'm told that already he has been shot at three times."

"Is that the individual?" I asked, pointing to a gross-looking man in the road; "for if it is, I should like to have a shot at him myself."

"Oh no," said Denison, "that's old Allen — 'Luncheon-Allen,' — the great prophet of the One-Meal-a-Day gospel. He's an ex-Jesuit, and protests he learnt the value of his principle while practising the fasts of his Order. As you may imagine, it's more interesting to see him eat in his own house than profitable to feed him in yours."

"Any more?" I asked.

"Well, yes, there is another; but he can hardly be mentioned without risking one's reputation for veracity."

"Mention him none the less," said I.

"You'll hardly believe me when I say we have a cannibal in the Settlement."

"But only in the abstract?"

"No, in the concrete. A real live can-

nibal who, according to his own account—which, mind you, I don't believe—eats human flesh three times a week, and proclaims it the sovereign cause of manly vigour and noble sentiment.”

“Nonsense!” I cried. “Where can he obtain the human flesh?”

“The fellow pretends that he imports it from New Guinea. He claims that he has some one out there in his pay who has made friends with a cannibal chief up-country. The savages cut the meat into strips, dry it in the sun, and insert it into the shells of cocoa-nuts, which, they say, improves the flavour. The nuts are sent down to the friend, who lives on the coast, and ships the goods by the mail-steamer every fortnight. If you are incredulous, we will call upon the cannibal to-morrow morning, and he will be delighted to indoctrinate you and give you an introduction to the only proper diet for man.”

“There's something preternatural about the Settlement,” said Mrs Denison, who had again joined us. “Perhaps the place is haunted—like Le Petit Trianon. I believe we're tapping somebody's dream. One day

we shall come back to the place and find nothing but an ordinary Garden City."

"I wish we could," said Denison.

And his wife added, "So do I."

"Perhaps old Rodright is still at his tricks," I said, "carrying on his business from another world."

"I dream of him almost every night," said Denison, "and until quite recently I never dreamed at all."

"In my opinion," I said, "every place is haunted where New Ideas are active. If we could see the course of men's thoughts taking place as a visible event in space and time, we should be in the presence of something quite unaccountable, of something altogether outside the reign of law, and we should have to reintroduce the whole array of elves, sprites, ghosts, and demons."

"And gods," said Denison.

"And angels," added his wife.

"As many as you like," I went on. "Denison, when you write the 'History of Human Opinion' you'll have to allow for the presence of miracles at every turn. It will be the greatest Wonder-book of all ages. The parting of the Red Sea, and the standing still of the Sun over the Valley of Ajalon,

will be stale trifles compared with the Wonders that you will relate. You must dedicate the book to the Witch of Endor."

"These are wild and whirling words," answered Denison. "Nothing is so entirely and obviously normal as the formation of opinion. Even in its widest eccentricities it all goes like the clock. The very follies of this Settlement are all traceable to a common root and illustrate the orderly working of a single principle. Some day I mean to prove it to the world."

"In which case," I interposed, "the Unification of all the Idealisms will be an accomplished fact."

"Accomplished *in a book*," said Mrs Denison. But here the dinner-bell interrupted us.



## III. THE TRAGEDY OF PROFESSOR DENISON

### 3. WEEDS

“When winter had gone and spring came back,  
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck ;  
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and darnels,  
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.”

THE cultivated garden has fewer weeds than the ploughed field. But leave both untended for a single year and this relation is reversed. The weeds in the garden will be ranker and their variety more uncouth. The subsoil is richer in dormant seeds.

The skin of our sceptical culture is very thin. Immediately below it lie the germs of things which in their growth are more surprising, perhaps more poisonous, than the common and predictable tares of ignorance, superstition, or inherited vice. Dig lightly in that soil.

Between my first and second visits to

Denison's Settlement more than a year had elapsed. In that interval the lightning had fallen on his roof-tree, and an earthquake had upturned the subsoil of his ordered life.

We were all surprised at Denison's intractable resolve to take up his permanent residence in his Settlement. We knew that it had become a source of great anxiety to him and to others; it had been the scene of a notorious scandal; there was even a rumour of impending bankruptcy; and the place was the laughing-stock of every comic paper in the land. When, therefore, Denison, on returning from abroad, shattered but convalescent, announced his intention to live there, resistance was offered from every side. The doctors issued prohibitions; friends and relatives exhausted the arts of dissuasion. All in vain. There was some talk of "reasons of economy"; others accepted the explanation that he would be less worried about the Settlement if living in its midst; but some would tell you, with a shake of the head, that poor Denison had lost his balance, and that a mysterious attraction was drawing him to the place.

I found Denison apparently in the best of

health. A casual observer would have detected nothing wrong. But now and then, as we walked together on the hills, he would lapse into gloomy silence and pay no attention to my remarks; then suddenly a flush of exuberant spirits would come over him, and he would begin to talk with the utmost excitement about the Settlement, using slang expressions which I had never heard on his lips before. I seemed to be in the presence of a dual personality, and was greatly bewildered as to what I should say or do.

“The Settlement’s not going to fail,” he said. “Old Rod never failed in anything; and this Settlement’s his show, not mine. It’s going to be a damned sight bigger success than anybody anticipated—except old Rod. You wait and see. Rod knew what he was doing; and in three years from now the people who are making fun of us will be laughing on the wrong side of their faces. Listen, and I’ll tell you a secret—and keep it quiet for three years. *Peter Rodright isn’t dead.* He’s more lively than ever he was and twice as clever.”

This alarmed me, and I said nothing in reply. Nor was it needful to answer. A moment later Denison had relapsed into

gloom ; he was drawing his breath quickly between his teeth, and presently there came a sob.

The party at dinner that night consisted of Denison, his wife, and myself ; and I was the least cheerful of the three. None of his children were living in his house, some being already out in the world, the rest at school. Mrs Denison was distinctly aged. There was a look of tension on her face ; she wore the air, so worshipful in woman, of one who was putting a brave front on a dangerous and perplexing situation. However, she was gay enough during dinner, or at least she pretended to be, and told the story of the visit to Professor Madovitch with exquisite humour and skill.

This brought down the house ; the gloom passed from Denison's brow ; he became animated and eager ; began talking of old times and inquiring after old friends.

“ Have you seen the two philosophers lately ? ” he asked, “ and how's the great Free-will controversy getting on ? ”

“ You mean Seawood and Franks ? ” I said. “ Well, the great controversy still lingers, though with a curious interchange of parts. However, the two men seem

faster friends than ever. But there's a mystery about them which I should like to clear up."

And here Denison told me of an incident concerning Seawood and Franks which I shall keep for the next chapter.

The story done, we sat for some minutes in silence. A course came on, was eaten and cleared away. Still nobody spoke. "Edith," said Denison at length, addressing his wife, "what stage have we reached in the evolution of this Gargantuan feast?" Receiving no answer, he turned to me. "What have we just been eating?" he said.

"Pheasant," I replied at a venture.

There was a laugh. "Even in the Settlement we don't eat pheasants in June," said Mrs Denison.

"Then what on earth was it?" I said. "I appeal to Cæsar—or rather to Cæsar's wife."

"James," said Mrs Denison to the footman, "what was the last course?"

"The fish, ma'am," said James.

"Oh, come," said Denison, "this will never do. We shall ruin our digestions."

"And have to join the New Gorillas for treatment," I added. "By the way, Deni-

son, the Age of Reason seems to have run its course in your Settlement, and the Age of Unreason commenced."

"Ha," said Denison, "that's an interesting point. But I venture to think you're altogether mistaken. Hullo, what's this? Pheasant at last. No, by George, it's spring-chicken! Thank you, James, for pointing out the difference. Now, as to the Age of Reason. Our friend Seawood will explain to you that Reason is the ground of universal agreement among intelligent beings, that the more people control their lives by scientific principles the more complete will be their accord in the pursuit of common ends—you know the story. My dear fellow, it's all the most absolute nonsense! The contrary is the truth. When people turn their backs on the unconscious instincts of the race and begin to reason out their lives on an independent basis, they inevitably break out into a chaos of diversities. The cranks in our Settlement are by-products of science, and could not exist in any but a scientific age. The whole place is a logical Pandemonium. I'll undertake that among all the lunatics here assembled there is not one who could not present a stronger argu-

ment for his mode of life than you or I could for ours. Argument!—why, these fellows could argue the stars out of the sky. Have you never observed that whatever is off its balance invariably rests upon an argument; and the more lopsided it is the more logic it can always offer on its own behalf? The perfectly normal life—if one may speak of such a thing—is self-poised, and never defends itself by any sort of apology. It's the abnormal that appeals to Reason—and that is what every crank in the Settlement can do, and do it to admiration.

“Take the unspeakable Polypædist. Well, the only way to deal with him is to shoot him, as you wanted to do that afternoon: but refute him you cannot. He has a scientific remedy for race-failure; you and I have none; we could only appeal to moral ideals, which a single breath of his logic would destroy. I'd back the Polypædist in an argument against all the moralists in Britain.

“Or take the Futurists next door—the Eli Pratts. I heard Mrs Pratt's lecture in Bradford last month on ‘The Martyrdom of Woman.’ She gave an appalling description of the pains of maternity, and said

that any woman who suffered those pains in the name of duty to humanity betrayed an intelligence no higher than the beasts! For herself, she said she would not undergo that martyrdom to save the whole human race from perishing to-morrow. The continuation of the species in the Future is to be carried on in laboratories, under the supervision of doctors, by volunteer women, who are to be paid a thousand pounds by the State for every child they bear. If the volunteers fail, the race must fail—and let it fail rather than continue the present martyrdom of women. ‘On the bed of agony where you bring forth your children, on the smoky altars where you boil the pot for your stupid husbands and your squealing brats, you are sacrificing youth, health, beauty, intelligence, happiness, life—everything! Idiots!’ Those were her very words to the women, and she defied all the parsons and learned men of the world to prove them untrue. Oh, never mind Mrs Denison. She is case-hardened to all this.

“Well, that’s science. That’s pure logic tackling the social ‘problem’; and again I’ll warrant Mrs Eli Pratt to make good her case against all the world. The Polypædist is the



only man I know who could hold his own against her for ten minutes. Believe me, there's only a single step, and that an inevitable step, from the life of Pure Reason to the life of Pure Insanity. Cut yourself off from the social instincts and betake yourself for guidance to logic and science, and it's a mere matter of temperament or accident what kind of crank you become, but a crank of some kind you will inevitably be. If you are a person of low tastes you'll join the Polypædists and force maternity on every woman you meet—unless you are shot in the meantime, as I hope you would be. If you are a woman and fanatically logical you'll go further and attach yourself to Mrs Eli Pratt. If you are an egotist or a valetudinarian you'll become a dirt-eater, or a bath-man, or a New Gorilla—or perhaps you'll turn into a cannibal, and argue far better for eating your fellow-men than we could for eating this spring-chicken.”

“The spring-chicken went long ago,” said Mrs Denison. “That's coffee in front of you now. For the future I shall feed you on gruel. It's much cheaper and more wholesome, and you won't know the difference. I'm beginning to understand ‘The

Martyrdom of Woman,' and have serious thoughts of joining Mrs Eli Pratt."

"Well, Denison," I said, "there's something infinitely tragic in all this. I don't know whether to laugh or weep. I confess to being utterly bewildered. You've put a thought into my head which, if it turns out true, will lay me under the painful necessity of burning my last course of lectures. I'm beginning to see that Pure Reason can be guilty of excess."

"That's the very point I'm going to work out in my next book," said the other. "Pure Reason, unrestrained by natural instinct and the intuitions of common sense, leads men on to greater follies and calamities than all the passions combined. Compared to this, fear, hate, love, jealousy are poor themes for tragedy. The excesses of Pure Reason! Why, man, didn't Hegel himself say that Truth is drunk in every limb?"

"Ah yes," I said, "but he didn't mean what you intend. Hegel meant——"

Mrs Denison interrupted me. "That's forbidden ground," she said. "Hirschheimer gave strict orders that Denison was to avoid the society of contentious people.

If you say another word about Hegel I'll turn you out of the house."

"Hirschheimer's orders are of universal validity," I answered; "would that all men were his patients. However, we've had a jolly dinner, though I can't exactly remember all we've eaten. I can only trust that the cannibal's cocoa-nuts have not been put under requisition. ("You shall have one for breakfast," cried Mrs Denison.) To tell the truth, I'm not altogether easy in mind about either of you. You are not as serious as you used to be. Denison, you wouldn't have dared to say these things in the Common Room. I suspect you've been studying French Literature. Is it Bergson or Anatole France?"

"Neither," said he. "I've expressed a sober and independent conviction, based on psychological study of the crank in being."

"Denison," I said, "you astonish me. All this is new. You're not the man you were. We're going to lose you."

I had made a deplorable *faux pas*, and in a flash I saw it. Mrs Denison gave me a reproachful look. The spirit of laughter departed on the instant, and the gloom returned to her husband's brow.

When Denison resumed the conversation his voice and manner were those of a pedant. He began to *approfondir* the subject of cranks. There was some element of truth, he said, in all of them, and they might all be traced to a common principle. It was the most remarkable illustration of unity breaking out into difference. He was preparing an article on the subject in which he would show the sameness which underlay their variety. It could easily be proved, for example, that our fat friend of the "New Gorilla" persuasion was twin brother to the lean Yogi over the way. Denison's residence in the Settlement had given him opportunities—unique opportunities—for the study of a subject which, so far as he knew, had never yet been put under analysis. For that reason alone he was glad that he came to live in the place. If he succeeded, as he thought he would, in bringing all these apparent eccentricities under the sweep of a unitary formula, it would afford one of the most striking confirmations of the law of evolution which had been discovered in recent times. Thus he talked, and I could see that Mrs Denison was not altogether pleased with the turn of the conversation,

and I am sure that she took not the slightest interest in the theory her husband was propounding.

After dinner there came a ring on the telephone, and while Mrs Denison was occupied in answering this, her husband, who was evidently watching his opportunity, suddenly slipped out of the room. Mrs Denison, on noticing his absence, at once summoned the servant.

“Where’s your master?” she said.

“I believe he’s gone across to Mr Jodrill’s, ma’am. I saw him put his hat and coat on in the hall and go out by the front door.”

Mrs Denison clutched my arm and broke down. “Come into the drawing-room,” she said. “I want to talk to you.”

I tried to reassure her. I spoke of the great change for the better in Denison’s appearance, of his vigour of mind, of the gaiety of his talk, of the return of his old hearty laugh, of the absence of morbid symptoms in his conversation at dinner.

“No, no,” she said, “it’s all on the surface. The old trouble is still there, underneath. I fear our coming to live in this place has been a great mistake—the worst possible mistake, in fact. It was done for the best—and

seemed the best at the time. The Settlement was the only thing in which Denison took the smallest interest after the blow had fallen; and, naturally, the one thing needful was to interest him. In a sense, and to some extent, the move has been a success. It would have been better, of course, if we could have had Adela and Margaret with us; they would have helped both him and me; and really the burden is a very heavy one for me to bear alone. But Margaret has got her Lectureship in Wales; and we've just bought Adela a practice in Torquay. I hope you will come down whenever you can; and persuade any of his old friends to come. I should like to keep up a constant succession of visitors in the house. Yes, we acted for the best; and I don't reproach myself for making the move. We couldn't foresee what was going to happen."

"We never can," I said.

"You can understand," she went on, "that all these medical cranks are a very great danger to a man in my husband's state of mind. I had no idea there were so many of them—nor would I have believed that any human beings could be as wicked as some of them are. They know, of course,

that we have plenty of money ; they have found out my husband's trouble and his weakness ; they have ascertained the exact form of his self-reproach ; and two or three of them have already begun to practise on him."

"But," I said, "his intelligence will be a sufficient safeguard. From the outset he sees through the whole thing, and it's impossible to conceive that a mind which has penetrated the meaning of these frauds, as his has done, should itself become a victim to any one of them."

"Ah no," answered Mrs Denison, "you are mistaken there. You will scarcely believe, perhaps, that every night at dinner he talks to me exactly as you have heard him to-night, and immediately afterwards walks straight into the arms of the most barefaced villainy that is being practised in the Settlement. You remember the story he told you about that pair of egregious self-deceivers, Seawood and Franks ? Well, Denison is acting under the delusion that proved the downfall of Franks. But, of course, he is not himself—and the drift of his sorrow is irresistible. Ah me !"

After a little Mrs Denison went on

“There’s a man named Pollack—a cashiered officer of the Indian Medical Service—who professes to cure all diseases by hypodermic injections of the poison of a certain snake, accompanied by some silly mental exercises and a kind of ritual. The two Yogis are implicated in that part of the affair—it was Pollack who brought them here. Well, this man has got hold of my husband, not directly, but through the younger Yogi, who pretends to be a philosopher, and gives séances for the study of the Upanishads. Denison goes there twice a week, though he knows the fellow is a scoundrel and that he has been horsewhipped for some immorality in Huddersfield. The Yogi is working on my husband’s trouble all the time. Next week he’s going to lecture on ‘The Philosophy of the Upanishads in their bearing on Indian methods of curing disease’; there’s his leaflet on the table. You see what it all means.

“But the worst thing has still to come. You heard the servant say that my husband had stepped across to Jodrill’s. Well, this Jodrill is a medium, and he has managed to convince Denison that he’s in communication with Rodright—and also with our boy



Arnold. Oh, it's sickening, infamous! He goes to Jodrill almost every night—I can't keep him away—and brings back sheets and sheets of automatic writing filled with unutterable nonsense. There are all kinds of messages purporting to come from Arnold. Some are for me, some for Adela and Margaret, some for his old college chums, and for people with whom Arnold had a casual acquaintance. Jodrill has managed to make himself acquainted with the details of our family history. I know, as a matter of fact, that he obtained some of his information from an old servant who was dismissed for dishonesty some years ago, and that he paid her between twenty and thirty pounds. I'm convinced that Jodrill is in league with both Pollack and the Yogis. Every time he brings out some message about India and works the matter nearer and nearer to the point. Look at this."

Mrs Denison produced from a pile of paper a sheet scribbled all over in blue pencil. I read: "Tell Dad to look for light in the tropics. Something green and shining—I've forgotten the name. Uncle Tom is trying to help me. Dear Dad, is that you? I'm watching over you and Mumsey."

I read no more, but flung the paper down in wrath.

“Could anything be more barefaced and wicked?” continued Mrs Denison. “And my husband believes it all; says he has applied every kind of logical test and is satisfied that the communications are genuine. Oh, it is heartrending to think that a really great mind should suffer shipwreck on a rock like that. But what is to be done?”

“Get Denison away at once,” I answered.

“Not so easy to do that,” said Mrs Denison. “He absolutely refuses to go. Says he must finish his study of psychological ‘sports,’ and pleads that he is getting better every day, and that it would kill him outright to leave.”

At this moment Denison himself came into the room. He was excited and jubilant. “My dear fellow,” he cried, taking me by the arm, “come with me into the study at once. I have something very important to tell you.”

“No, no,” said his wife, “not to-night. It’s too late, and both of you are dead tired. You’ve talked enough for to-day. Don’t risk

the loss of your sleep, dear, for Heaven's sake. Here, finish this novel, and I'll bring you your draught. Remember what Hirschheimer said in his last letter."

"Hirschheimer's a fool!" cried Denison, "an absolute, hopeless obscurantist. So are they all—every one of them! Humbugs, liars, cheats! They killed Arnold and they'll kill me. But I won't let them. I've done with orthodox medical science for ever. My initial mistake was in trusting it. If I'd only known then what I know now! Why, George Pollack has more knowledge of the human body than all the medical schools of Europe and America combined. I defy them all!"

"Come, come," said his wife, "calm yourself, and take this." And she handed him his draught.

"Throw physic to the dogs," cried Denison, and, snatching the glass from his wife, he flung it with all its contents into the fire. There was a burst of steam, and a blue flame shot up into the chimney. "Here, come along," he said to me. "I've something to tell you that's worth hearing. Let Hirschheimer go to glory! Do you mind ringing that bell? Mary, tell

James to bring whisky and soda into the library."

Mrs. Denison looked at me imploringly.

"I'm sorry, Denison," I said, "but I'm quite incapable of sitting up any longer. The fact is I'm not feeling very fit. I've got a touch of my old sciatica, and I'm anxious to go to bed."

"My dear fellow," he replied, "I'm so sorry. Why didn't you tell me before? However, you've come to the right place to get cured. Come round with me to-morrow morning to see George Pollack and he'll put you right in an hour. The effect of his hypodermic injection is perfectly amazing! Odd! That was one of the very things I wanted to tell you. I've just seen him perform an experiment on a crippled girl at Jodrill's. He uses a preparation of snake-poison. I'll tell you about Jodrill to-morrow. The first effect of the poison was to send the girl into a profound sleep; in five minutes the crippled limb—crippled from birth, mind you—began to move; in ten minutes she was walking about the room and jumping on the chairs. No nonsense about it at all! The action of the poison is perfectly intelligible, and Pollack makes a secret of nothing. He'll

tell you about it and thoroughly explain the process to-morrow morning.”

“All right,” I said, “we’ll go round to Pollack immediately after breakfast and discuss the whole matter. But now, we’re detaining Mrs Denison. Good-night, and for mercy’s sake don’t sit up late.”

As I was ascending the stairs he ran after me. “There’s just one thing,” he said in a whisper, “just one thing I want you to know before you go to bed. An awful load has been lifted off my mind to-night—the thing that’s been crushing me for months. I’ve got evidence—irrefragable evidence—that O’Flaherty could have done nothing for my poor boy. It was beyond his reach altogether. There’s absolutely no ground on which I can reproach myself. Oh, it’s an immense relief—I can’t tell you what it means to me. And the evidence comes—from *Arnold himself!* We’ve had a communication—a message from the other side. Don’t form an opinion till you hear more. Meanwhile, you can take my word for it—everything has been for the best—the working out of a perfectly consistent and beneficent plan. Good-night.”

I slept little that night; but it was not

sciatica that kept me awake. Next morning Denison was too ill to come downstairs, and I was spared the problem of having to extricate myself from the visit to the infamous Pollack.

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The people at the private asylum to which Denison had been sent kept me regularly informed of his condition, and I never failed to take advantage of any change for the better to visit him—sometimes alone, sometimes in the sad company of his wife or one of his children. On the whole he was radiantly happy. Once only was there a disaster. The great alienist who had charge of him had made some mistake in naming the day of the week on which we might see him, and we were admitted to his rooms under insufficient precautions. Denison, on seeing me, called out, “You’re dismissed, Sir. The case is in other and better hands. I’ll have none of your damned Swedish tricks practised on my poor boy.” He had taken me for Oskar Blom, and I had to beat a prompt retreat.

At other times he would talk quietly and sanely about Arnold, and always at some turn of the conversation would say,

“ You see, I now know that it would have been perfectly futile to call in O’Flaherty. O’Flaherty would have been absolutely helpless. My initial mistake lay much further back. I made no allowance for the fact that medicine is necessarily an inexact science. No competent doctor would claim that it is anything else. Exact or inexact, however, it would have made no difference. Things had to be as they are—Arnold himself has told me so. I may have trusted too much to orthodox medicine. But I am not to blame for that. My initial mistake was quite innocent. It was all part of the working out of a perfectly consistent and intelligible plan.”

## IV. THE SELF-DECEIVERS

SEAWOOD and Franks were the Pylades and Orestes of our philosophical circle. Though attached to one another as men, they were opposed as philosophers. Seawood was a Determinist ; Franks was a Libertarian. They were Fellows of the same College, and lived on opposite sides of the Quad.

The relationships of these men to one another, and of each to his own philosophy, are matters not easy to describe. In attempting to convey a just idea I find myself driven to the employment of mixed metaphors and of analogies that don't run on all-fours. This, however, has some vestige of an excuse. For the Genius of Mixed Metaphor was dominant in the thinking of Seawood and the Spirit of Lame Analogy haunted Franks in his dreams.

Thus the relation of each philosopher to his philosophy may be described as that of



a Cossack to his horse, by which I would merely intimate that they frequently rode their theories to death. Again, their philosophies were their professional outfits; they had acquired them by dint of hard study on their own part, and by the expenditure of much money on the part of their parents, and each philosophy was now producing its owner an income of three or four hundred a year. Both of them were young men; and both were intimately, though diversely, acquainted with the constitution of the universe.

The two philosophers—to use the metaphor of a picturesque critic of their works—held “militant views”; that is to say, I suppose, they meditated pugnaciously, and their very “standpoints” were aggressive. The “views,” indeed, were like quarrelsome dogs, and there was much barking at all times. Thus we are provided with a second figure which enables me to say that the views were given a daily airing. Whenever they met they snarled and bit one another’s tails; and occasionally there was a furious combat. The noise was incredible, though I could never learn that any damage was done to either side.

As to the recognised eminence of our two thinkers, I cannot do better than repeat another metaphor recently used by a writer on the vexed question of "Truth." "Truth," said this writer, breaking out into a definition—"Truth is what drips out of the barrel, when a Seawood or a Franks puts his head into the bunghole of the universe." What would happen to the universe if a Seawood or a Franks withdrew his head from the bunghole was not stated. But enough of metaphor, whether pure or mixed.

Seawood, as the reader may remember, was Organising Secretary to the famous Determinist Club. The objects of this institution, as stated in the Prospectus, were "to disseminate Determinist literature, to influence legislation on Determinist lines, and to promote the teaching of Determinism in the Elementary Schools." An opposition movement, led by Franks, had, of course, been started; it was called "the Libertarian Alliance," and its objects were "to promote the systematic cultivation of Free-will; to increase the range of alternatives for Church and State; and to introduce the profession of Libertarianism into the Coronation Oath." Both movements were extremely active,

and each new development of the one was immediately countered by the other. When, for example, the Club started its "Van Movement to the Country Districts," the Alliance sent other Vans in pursuit; and the controversy between Hume and Kant waxed hot on many a village green.

One day, not long after Franks had published his *magnum opus* on Free-will, I visited him, with a purpose, in his College rooms.

"Franks," I said, "I've read your book, and I want to congratulate you. Your case is unanswerable. There's not a flaw in the argument. You've smashed Determinism once and for all, and henceforth it will be impossible for any logical mind to embrace Determinist opinions."

"I'm delighted to hear it," said Franks. "I knew you'd come round in due time. Indeed, you've been a Libertarian all along without knowing it. And I'm proud to think my work has helped you to discover the fact. Of course, you'll now join the Alliance."

"No," I answered. "That's what I've come to explain. I intend to join the Determinist Club."

“ But I thought you said that my book had smashed Determinism.”

“ There’s no flaw in your argument, Franks, but there’s a difficulty in its application. And the difficulty, oddly enough, arises from the very conclusiveness of your reasoning.”

“ I’m afraid I don’t understand you,” said Franks, speaking in a frigid voice.

I must here explain that Franks had a very low opinion of my abilities as a philosopher. So had Seawood. This was one of the few points on which the two men were agreed. It was a little humiliating to me, and the only consolation I had was that each of them rated the philosophic competence of the other almost as low as he rated mine.

“ Let me explain,” I said.

“ Do so; but pray be serious. And above all, don’t argue for argument’s sake.”

“ I’m not going to. I merely want you to understand why I won’t join your Alliance, and why I will join the Determinist Club. The position is this. I’ve no objection to being a Libertarian by choice; but a Libertarian under compulsion is what I will not be. Now your book is an act of compulsion—of logical compulsion, which is the most

ineluctable form of tyranny in the whole world. You leave no loophole of escape. You give one no choice at all. The fact is that unless a protest is made at once your book will extinguish Free-will in the choice of one's opinions on this great question; and since, according to you, a man's general conduct is the direct outcome of those opinions; the book will extinguish Freedom in regard to all morality whatsoever. Therefore, I'm going to make my protest, and I'm going to make it by freely choosing to be a Determinist. Franks; you must admit that a person who freely chooses to be a Determinist is a more consistent Libertarian than one whom Logic coerces into the profession of Free-will."

"I'm not going to admit any such shallow sophistry," said Franks, and a smile of pity played round the corners of his mouth.

"It's not sophistry," I urged, "it's downright deadly earnest. It's the fierce shout of Free-will fighting in the last ditch, and fighting against betrayal. Franks, there's a chance for Free-will only so long as the risk of error attaches to the arguments by which it is supported. But this risk your work has eliminated. Your proof is conclusive as a

proposition in Euclid. If only you had left a flaw in your argument it would have been all right. You ought to have done so. But you haven't. Thanks to your irrefragable logic it has become as impossible to *choose* Libertarianism as it is to choose the conclusion of the *Pons Asinorum*. The only thing that one can now choose in that line is Determinism, and that is what I am going to do, and I do it in the name of Freedom."

"I wonder where you have picked up this nonsense," said Franks. "Perhaps you've been dabbling in the *Will to Believe*. James is no doubt a very able psychologist—but no philosopher. At all events, you must excuse me from going further into the matter to-night. A mass of Alliance letters has just come in, and I must answer them before the mail goes out. Perhaps we shall meet at the Dialectical Congress in St. Petersburg next autumn."

I picked up my hat and departed. Crossing the Quad in the direction of Seawood's staircase I looked back and saw that Franks was watching me from his window. Instantly he disappeared.

Seawood, who regarded me as a bore, consulted his list of engagements the moment

I entered the room, and it was only by coming to business at once that I saved him from having to see a pupil in five minutes.

“Seawood,” I said, “I wish to join the Determinist Club. Here is my entrance fee,” and I put two guineas on the table.

He closed his pocket-book and looked up. “My dear fellow,” he said, “this is a pleasant surprise indeed. But what on earth can have wrought so sudden a change?”

“Franks’ book.”

He laughed. “Well,” he said, “I thought we should get you some day. I was greatly impressed by that last article of yours. Its latent necessarianism was almost on the surface, and I knew a further step was inevitable. But it’s really amusing that Franks should have compelled you to take it. Amusing, but not surprising. Poor old Franks! He’s a very able fellow and delightful company, but as a philosopher he’s beneath contempt. I was saying to my class only this morning that that book of his in defence of Free-will would make more converts to Determinism than anything that has been written during the last hundred years. Did you ever see such a tissue of

rotten argumentation as that book contains from cover to cover ? ”

“ Seawood,” I said, “ the arguments are not rotten. They’re sound. They’re convincing, overwhelming, conclusive. Franks has smashed you all to bits, and, logically speaking, you’ll never be heard of any more.”

“ Is this an attempt at brilliant paradox ? I should think so, if it were not for these two guineas. Presumably you are in earnest ; but it’s hard to believe. What *do* you mean ? ”

I proceeded to explain myself in much the same terms as I had used to Franks. Before I had done Seawood was again fumbling with his engagement-book.

“ We can’t accept you on any such terms,” he said, with the book half open in his hand. “ You must forgive me for being frank ; but I’m in a hurry. The whole proposition is perfectly childish. Besides, our Committee would black-ball you to a certainty. And there’s nothing more to be said about it.”

“ Don’t go yet,” I said. “ Give me five minutes more. I’m in a real difficulty and want your help. Suppose, now, a man came to you and confessed that he



had been forced into Libertarianism against his will by Franks' logic; suppose that he treated his conversion to Libertarianism as a thing he couldn't help, as an instance of rank determination, as an event in the system of natural causation, as inevitable as the fall of a stone—to whose Society ought he to belong, yours or Franks' ? ”

“To ours undoubtedly,” said the other. “We've already admitted some scores of members on that basis. But observe their case is not yours. They put Determinism behind Free-will, you do the opposite. They are Libertarians under Necessity. You are a Necessarian by choice.”

“Then,” I said, “to whose Society ought I, and such as I, to belong ? ”

“To Franks',” said Seawood, in a tone of voice that seemed to indicate that the Libertarian Alliance would not be greatly strengthened by our adhesion.

“That settles the matter,” I cried, and, putting the two guineas into my pocket, I rushed back to Franks. I found him reading a novel, which he laid down with marked reluctance to listen to the account of the changed posture of my philosophical affairs.

“And so you want to join the Libertarian

Alliance after all," he said. "Do I understand that your professed adherence to our principles is an act of free choice?"

"Certainly not," I said. "How can I freely choose your principles after you have proved them to be true and all others to be false?"

"Then what has brought you back?"

"I promised to be ruled by Seawood's opinion," I said, "and he showed me that I belonged by right to your Society."

"Precisely. You now stand convicted out of your own mouth. You make this application not on your own free initiative but on the ruling of another, and that other is—Seawood. A clearer case of heteronomy could not be found. Your position, which was at first an autonomous choice of Determinism, has now become a heteronomous acceptance of Free-will. Obviously you belong to Seawood, not to us."

"Franks," I said, "this isn't fair. When I told you that I had been convinced by *your* arguments you said nothing about heteronomy, and were willing enough to accept me. But now that I succumb to an argument of Seawood's you accuse me of Determinism, and turn the heel on me."

“That’s another thing altogether,” he replied, “and as usual you fail to discriminate. To be convinced of Free-will by Free-will arguments is one thing. To take up Free-will under Determinist guidance is another. This last is your position, and it plainly disqualifies you for our Alliance. As soon as our Committee learnt the facts they would black-ball you to a certainty. You must go back to Seawood.”

The full recital of that horrible nightmare shall not be inflicted on the reader. Suffice it to say, that till the small hours of the morning I was tossed like a shuttlecock across the College Quad by the two battledores, Seawood and Franks. At each successive interview I learnt a new lesson in theory and encountered a new difficulty in practice. Seawood, on my second visit, took me thoroughly in hand, and, with Franks’ great work open before him, pointed out seven flaws in the Libertarian argument which had previously escaped my observation. This was an immense relief; it sent me back to Franks, protesting that I was now in a position to freely embrace Free-will, on the ground that Seawood’s logic was compulsory, and his own “rotten.” Franks

replied that to admit me on these terms would involve the Alliance in general, and himself in particular, in a confession of failure so monstrous, that the thing was not to be thought of for a moment.

So it went on; so, for aught I know, it might have continued from that hour to this, even as it had continued already for thousands of years. But the spirit of contentiousness gave out through sheer exhaustion, and bad temper lent its aid to end the controversy. I wanted, and still want, to join the Free-will Alliance. But I had made the fatal error of giving *reasons* for that preference, thereby unconsciously proclaiming myself a Determinist. From that day onwards both the Free-will Alliance and the Determinist Club have obstinately refused to have anything to do with me.

Taking them all round, it would be hard to find two more satisfactory specimens of the human race than Seawood and Franks. Physically, mentally, and morally, they were a credit to their parents, to the University; and to the State. Although in the opinion of each the philosophy of the other was bound in the long-run to degrade its holder

to the level of the Hottentot, this deplorable event was certainly not yet in view; indeed one might say that there wasn't, morally speaking, a pin to choose between them. Neither of them was within measurable distance of the level of the Hottentot, and neither was moving in that direction.

Nevertheless, there was a weakness, and they shared it in common. Both of them were fond of money. Franks loved money because he was rich; Seawood loved it yet more ardently because he was poor. Franks had a private income of £800 a year. Seawood had his professional earnings, and he was educating his younger brother at school. Franks, again, amused himself with a certain financial hobby which gave him considerable scope for his free-will; and Seawood, who was learning to ride the same hobby, found in this exercise a pleasant relief from the mental strain of demonstrating the universality of the causal nexus.

Franks was no less generous in his use of money than he was fortunate in its acquisition. He helped impecunious undergraduates; took shares in benevolent "Companies" which were certain to pay no interest; and subscribed to any Charity which could show

a shadow of excuse for its existence. A more free-handed Libertarian I have never met. About Seawood also there was nothing mean. If he had a spare half-crown in his pocket he would give to anybody who was in need. It was this quality, I think, or this combination of qualities, which drew the two men so closely together.

Shortly after the humiliating rejection of my alternate overtures to the Free-will Alliance and the Determinist Club, it happened that I was appointed Treasurer to the Society for Providing Lamé Dogs with Stiles, which was then in desperate need of funds. I had undertaken to canvass for new subscriptions, and, naturally, the first person to whom I went was the wealthy Franks. To my surprise I found him greatly depressed, and when I stated the object of my visit he responded with a woe-ful shake of the head.

“I can give nothing,” he said, “for the simple reason that I have nothing to give. A heavy blow has fallen in my financial affairs, and I’m very deeply involved. How far things have gone you may judge from the fact that I have had to borrow money from Seawood. Kindly mention nothing of this outside.”

Going away full of conjecture I was presently roused from my meditations by a tap on the shoulder. It was Seawood.

"I've been looking for you," he said. "I'm delighted to hear that you've taken up the cause of the *Lame Dogs*. It's a most admirable movement, and you are just the man to work it. Put me down for twenty pounds."

Completely taken off my guard by this surprising offer, good manners deserted me, and I blurted out—

"But, Seawood, can you afford it?"

"Oh yes. Be easy in your mind about that. Some money has just come to me from a wholly unexpected quarter." And before I could say another word he turned away and went down the street.

A few days later I learnt that Seawood had taken a large house in the suburbs; that he had bought a motor, and that his long-deferred marriage to a charming girl was to take place next month. There was much perplexity in our circle, and many baseless conjectures were thrown out.

It was Professor Denison who first enlightened me as to the meaning of these things. We were seated one night at dinner,

as I have already related, and during an interval when the heavy cloud was lifted that usually hung over Denison's brow he began to ask about his old friends, and in particular about the two philosophers. I gave him some general information and then added—

“But a curious thing has happened in connection with those two men, which none of us can explain. Seawood who; you remember, was always hard up, has suddenly blossomed out into a big house, a motor, and a marriage. The wealthy Franks, on the other hand, is apparently stone-broke.”

Denison looked significantly at his wife, who responded with a glance that gave him permission to speak.

“I think I can throw some light on that,” he said. “It's a very remarkable story.” And he waited for the butler to leave the room.

Then he proceeded as follows :—

“You remember that last autumn Seawood and Franks took a trip together to the Mediterranean and the Isles of Greece. For several weeks, I am told, they argued Free-will up and down the shores of the Ægean, until the thing became a nuisance to their



fellow-passengers. It was the time of my illness, and my wife and I were staying in Monte Carlo. One day I strolled into the Casino to see the gamblers. Judge of my surprise when, on looking round the faces at the table, I recognised our two philosophers. Both were playing deep, and I could see from their faces that they were in the height of the gambling fever. Seawood had won a huge sum of money; Franks had also won, though to a much smaller amount. The sight gave me a shock, and, as both men were old pupils of mine, I resolved to give them a word of friendly advice. Seawood eluded me, but I caught Franks as he was leaving the Casino. 'Franks,' I said, 'this will lead to no good. Leave Monte Carlo at once.' 'Oh,' he answered, 'you needn't be alarmed for me. I have myself under perfect control. I can stop whenever I choose.' 'Choose now,' I said, 'and never put your foot in that place again.' 'I'll think over what you've said,' he replied, and he left me with the feeling that my intervention had offended him.

"I now proceeded to look for Seawood. I found, however, that he was looking for me. We had hardly reached our Hotel when he

suddenly burst into our sitting-room. ‘Professor Denison,’ he said, ‘I want you to help me. A power that I can’t resist has got possession of my will. I’m a lost man. You’ve no idea what this gambling mania is. It fascinates, overpowers one. It’s like a physical compulsion. If I walk away from the thing, it takes hold of me and turns me round, and I’m back in the Casino before I know what is happening. For God’s sake tell me what I’m to do.’

“I was about to reply when my wife came into the room. ‘See my husband to-morrow morning,’ she said; ‘he’s under strict orders to avoid excitement at night,’ and she led Seawood away before I could get in a word.

“I went to bed deeply troubled about Seawood, as you may imagine. Franks, I thought, might be left to look after himself. But for Seawood, with his unfortunate notions about Determinism, I felt sure a catastrophe was in preparation.

“Coming down late next morning I heard, to my relief and to my great surprise, that Seawood had left Monte Carlo, having taken the midnight train to Paris. On inquiring for Franks I learnt he was again at the Casino. And nothing that I could say had the slightest

influence upon him. He went on playing until he lost every sovereign he had, and was compelled to borrow money from me to pay his fare home. 'Of course,' he said, 'I have only myself to blame. I know perfectly well that I could have stopped at any moment. But I kept on deferring a decision, which I ought to have made, and knew that I could make, when you first warned me.' Seawood, on the other hand, wrote from Paris: 'It was fortunate for me that after speaking to you that night the horror of my helpless condition completely overpowered the fascination of gambling, and literally drove me out of Monte Carlo.' "

"Denison," I said, "is this story an argument for Determinism?"

"Not in the least. But I shall be much surprised if Seawood does not make it into one. And I have a strong suspicion that Franks also discovered a new argument for Free-will on the same occasion."

"What then is the moral?" I asked.

"Oh, you must draw your own moral. My part is merely that of the psychological observer. And what I observe is this: Seawood's conviction that he was helpless is precisely what helped him to break free.

Franks' conviction that he was free, on the other hand, is precisely what led him deeper into the toils."

"Well," I said, "if that's not an argument for Determinism there never was one."

"Of course there never was; nor for Free-will, neither. The whole controversy is a mere dispute as to the meaning of metaphors. But it's a fortunate thing that Mrs. Denison cut short my interview with Seawood. For if I had convinced him, as I should have tried to do, that his helplessness was a delusion, and that he was able to leave Monte Carlo that very night, it's certain that he would have stayed on with Franks until the pair of them had been cleaned out."

"How can you be sure of that?" I asked. Denison did not reply, and there was silence for some minutes. At last he said—

"Can you tell me in what precise points the principles of the Libertarian Alliance differ from the principles of the Determinist Club?"

"I am quite unable to do so," I said—and bitter memories came to mind. "It seems to me," I went on, "that if the argument for Free-will were *quite* conclusive, it would

make Determinists of us all. Whereas if the logic of Determinism were to triumph, we should all be compelled to embrace Free-will."

"My good friend," said Denison, "are you quite sure that you have not mistaken your calling?"

"Not entirely sure. The other day I read a passage in a philosophical treatise; which filled me with doubt as to my fitness for the prosecution of these studies. The passage was this: 'The single relation is now seen to *swallow up* the whole mass of the other relations.'"

"What an extraordinary expression!" said Denison. "Where did you find it?"

"In a book of Seawood's on Determinism. I was so bewildered in attempting to construct the imagery suggested, that I could read no further. Then I fell to wondering what would have happened to Seawood's reputation if instead of writing 'swallowed up' he had written 'gobbled up' or even 'gulped down.'"

"That would have strengthened the metaphor, but ruined Seawood," said Denison. "But the original is sufficiently picturesque. In that respect it can only be compared to the definition of Truth you are so fond of

quoting—I mean the one about Seawood's head and the bunghole of the Universe.”

“I'm half inclined,” I said, “to attempt an article on ‘the Uses of Mixed Metaphor in Philosophy.’”

“It will run to a treatise,” said Denison.

## V. MARY <sup>1</sup>

### I

THE Birth Register declares that Mary was born in 1880; but for my part I can hardly believe it. For Mary's record proves, by internal evidence, that she lived in a future so remote from the present that she cannot have been born in the past. I have never been able to understand how there can be any basis in history for the lives of people who are in advance of their age; and Mary was greatly in advance of hers. Thus I am at a loss to construct a tense which would convey an idea of the date of Mary's birth. Even the paulo-post-futurum would be, in my opinion, far too early.

Although Mary was a New Woman, she was the most charming of my friends. This is not a novel; none the less I cannot refrain

<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1911.

from recording that Mary had a tall and graceful figure, and, in the judgment of all men and some women, a perilously beautiful face. She was gay, witty, mordant, audacious—and she had other qualities of a like nature which, though theoretically not lovable in women, have the property of causing them to be loved. And with these went an endowment of the softer graces which, even if the others had been absent, would have endowed her personality with a desolating force. Moreover, she was an M.A.

As to the New Womanhood represented by Mary, I must confess myself in a difficulty. It is, I believe, the old trouble about the definition of terms ; though Mary herself always set it down to my want of intelligence. In one sense every woman you meet is most emphatically a New One ; and the last one met is always so surprising as to leave most people incapable for the time being of apprehending anything Newer. But the phrase on Mary's lips had a technical signification to which she attached great importance ; and this meaning, there is reason to think, is very hard to convey to persons who lack a Special Training.

Lacking this training myself, I was not



a good subject for enlightenment, though Mary took great pains to enlighten me. I could never grasp the point at which the Newness of the New Woman began. As I listened to her explanations, I felt a victim to the association of ideas and fancied I was hearing a lecture on Archæology : a distinct flavour of antiquity would come into my mouth and I would begin to think about Mother Eve and Jezebel ; about Schliemann's discoveries at Troy ; about the Taj Mahal ; about the ladies whose residuary forms are to be seen in the mummy cases at the British Museum—and so on.

Mary was not domesticated, and pitied those who were. She earned her own living easily, and maintained a rather elegant little flat in the West End. To her excellent father, who was a Baptist minister, she was a sore perplexity ; to her ignorant and bigoted mother she was an object of bitter aversion. Her sisters were afraid of her ; and her brother, who was going to be a missionary, couldn't " make her out."

When Mary lived at home, there were daily scenes ; and her occasional visits, after she had become independent, seldom failed to raise a breeze. Her father was

often heard to lament 'that he had ever sent her to college'—an enterprise which had cost him half his income and deprived him of his daughter. Night and morning he prayed for her return to straight paths—openly in family prayers, secretly as he walked his rounds; or after he had retired to his room. He would lie awake for long hours—praying for Mary, and when at last he fell asleep he would pray for her in his dreams. But the heavens were deaf to his entreaties. The more he prayed the more "dreadful" became Mary's views. How the good man managed to retain his faith in the efficacy of prayer, and to uphold that of his flock, I know not.

Looking down upon the actual world from her view-point in the Nietzsche enlightenment, Mary saw nothing but stupidity. She saw society based upon stupid conventions; she saw civilisation devoted to stupid aims; she saw religion nurtured on stupid illusions. And of all the stupid things in this stupid world, the British Public was the stupidest. One debt, and one debt only, did Mary acknowledge to society: it provided her with "subjects"—subjects for mirth, subjects for brilliant

satire, subjects for extremely profitable literary enterprise. Mary had already written two plays, one of which had been accepted by a London manager. It dealt, of course, with the marriage problem, and the elegant little flat was its fruit. One often wondered what occupation would be left for a person of Mary's gifts if his lot should happen to be cast in a world where there was no marriage problem, or in an age when the British and other Publics had sloughed off their stupidity and become as clever as Mary herself.

Indeed, I was often surprised that Mary should keep acquaintance with a person like myself. I suspect that it was my excessive stupidity which drew her to my doors. In me she found gathered up, in a cheap and easily accessible form, the various illusions which it was her mission to defy and shatter, and thus she obtained, in the time required for smoking two cigarettes, a familiarity with current obscurantisms which would otherwise have involved her in weeks of laborious observation. There are few cherished convictions of mine which have not been exploded by Mary a score of times. So often has she raked me fore and aft in the presence of my family and of my friends ;

so often has she compelled me to admit, in spite of myself, that my views were those of a perfectly irrational being; so often has she turned the laugh against my idols; so often has she converted my serious arguments into good stories to be told at my expense, that it strikes me as strange that I still should love her memory. I could not have endured it from another person. But, somehow, I enjoyed being made ridiculous by Mary. Nay, when I was dragged, after much reluctance, to see her play, *The Fall of Polly*, on the night of its two hundred and fiftieth performance, and saw everything that I loathed held up to honour, and everything that I honoured trampled in the mud, I was still not offended, but rather gratified, for I remembered that Mary had done it; and when she appeared before the curtain I cried, "God bless her!"—to the infinite amusement of the people in the stalls.

"Have you seen *The Indiscretions of Gwendoline*?" she said to me one day; "it's the greatest drama of modern times."

"No," I answered, "I've not seen it. And I'm not going to see it."

“Poor thing! Why don't you come out of your hole?”

“Because I like my hole. It's warm and comfortable.”

“You're an incarnation of the whole British Public—at least you would be, if you were not so thin.”

“Mary,” I said, “you're playing with fire.”

“Quite so. But your hole, that you find so comfortable, is warmed by the fires that people played with in the past. We're warming the hole for the future, and using the smoke for driving you out of yours.”

“Mind you don't get suffocated in your own smoke.”

“Dearest uncle! I'll work you a pair of nice warm slippers for your next birthday. But tell me—have you read *Les Aveugles*?”

“What?”

“*Les Aveugles*—it's all the rage in Paris. The plot turns on the problem of——”

“Not another word, Mary. It makes me sick to hear you speak of this.”

“And so say all of you! And because

you say it, millions of human lives are under a curse.”

“ Silence ! ”

“ Well said, old mole ! But I’m not so easily shut up. I’ve not taken part in Suffragette demonstrations for nothing. And how, pray, do you propose to deal with the evil ? ”

“ Rather than tell *you*, Mary, I’d tear my tongue out.”

“ Which is only a melodramatic way of expressing your childlike ignorance of the whole matter. Well, I’ve something to say about that question, and before six months are out all London will be talking about it.”

“ Under its breath, I trust. But, Mary, does this mean that you are writing another play ? ”

“ It does.”

“ Don’t—dear Mary, don’t ! What cursed spite has doomed a sweet young girl like you to sully her fingers with such filth ! You’re floundering in a bog of lies. Get out of it, for God’s sake ! Take a cottage in Surrey, with three acres and a cow—and a pony and cocks and hens. Milk the cow and clean out the pony’s stable, and put

your play on the fire-back. Then you'll become a sane woman."

"Ferocious Puritan," said Mary, "we'll crop your ears and put you in the pillory as soon as the New Order begins. But you're a dear old ignoramus, all the same. Have you never read in your favourite philosophers that the grossest subjects lose their grossness under the transmuting touch of Art? What about Keats and the Pot of Basil?"

"Fudge!" I said. "If Keats had been obsessed by any such theory he would never have written a line worth remembering. Fancy Shakespeare sitting down to write a psychological play! Why, Mary, can't you see that all your characters are just marionettes? Your *Fall of Polly* is no more a drama than Punch and Judy is. I fancied I saw you pulling the strings; and really, my girl, you pulled them rather clumsily at times."

"It's made my fortune, anyhow," said Mary.

"No doubt. But if your estimate of British stupidity were a trifle more thorough-going, you'd understand why. The play succeeds because it contains just the kind

of humbug that pleases people who want to think themselves as clever as you are. And there's another reason which your denomination is rather slow to see. You flatter yourselves that you are widening the horizon of the British public, while all the time you are only providing them with the low sensations they love. Without that salt to flavour your dish, nobody would ask for it. That's what makes it go down."

"This," said Mary, "is both stupid and commonplace. The glory of the modern drama, if you could only see it, is that for the first time in history we are putting plays on the stage that are true to human nature, and express the fundamental needs which convention has suppressed."

"Fudge again!" I said. "Your notion that life is acted psychology is the fundamental lie which dooms the whole array of your novels and plays to the dung-hills of history. Fortunately for the world, there are some strings in human nature which not even Ibsen and Nietzsche can teach you to pull. And I'll tell you another thing. People nowadays—thanks to your doings—love to imagine themselves in situations which they haven't the courage to



touch in real life. Provide them with that sort of imagery, and they will pay you well. Meanwhile they are losing interest in the actual world because it fails to yield them the spiced poison diet of your preposterous psychology. And there is not a single thing they learn from you which more than one in ten thousand is bold enough to translate into action."

"You've said that twice over," answered Mary, "and I'm doubtful if it's worth saying at all. Besides, I've heard it before; it's quite a commonplace. However, you admit that one person in ten thousand has the courage to *do* something. Don't you think the example of that one may hearten up the others in course of time?"

"No, I don't. The one imagines, no doubt, he's going to be a lighthouse. And he invariably turns out a shipwreck."

"Indeed! What about ——" And Mary mentioned names, beginning with George Sand, and ending with the heroine of the last sensational novel.

"A most illustrious company," I said. "But, Mary, don't you think it a trifle inconsistent that you who preach the duty of being original should yet find your type

of originality in women who have defied convention on a solitary point? After all, there is no fixed way of being original; not even that of running off with another woman's husband. Can't you invent a new sin? The monotony of this one is appalling."

"The newness consists in the way you do it," said Mary, "and the ways of doing it are endless. I've invented over forty myself. In fact, there's nothing that gives more scope to the imagination."

"I wish you'd stop inventing them, and invent a new mouse-trap instead. This house is overrun with mice, and a really efficient trap would be a boon. Society would be more grateful for a new mouse-trap than for a new form of breaking the marriage vow. Besides, Mary, I'm old-fashioned enough to be thinking that your imagination could find as much scope and more wholesome occupation in some other field. And then think how easily people who want those things can invent them for themselves. Whereas a good mouse-trap is a work of genius, and utterly beyond the compass of most of us."

"Well," said Mary, "you'll be pleased

to hear that I'm not going to invent any more. At least I'm first going to try some experiments. Meanwhile, I'll think about the mouse-trap."

She put a finger to her lips and stared into the fire. Her last words startled me, for they were spoken in a deep voice which Mary always used when she meant more than she said. When, a moment later, she turned her eyes upon me, they were full of tears. She sprang from her seat, grasped my hand and departed.

## II

As we have seen, Mary was, in her own way, a philosopher. Under the guidance of Nietzsche and other kindred spirits, she had excogitated, or perhaps stolen, a *Weltanschauung*—a view of life. Up to a certain point in her career, Mary's view of life resembled that of several other philosophers in being a view, and nothing more. That is to say, it was something wholly apart from the life of which it professed to be a copy. Life existed for the purpose of providing clever people, like herself, with

the opportunity of viewing it, criticising it, and, in the case of very clever people, of making fun and money at its expense. That any one should make the attempt to *live* according to his views of life had never occurred to Mary as a serious proposition ; for according to her philosophy—I mean the unconscious part of it—views were not made for life, but life for views. Nor had she ever reflected on the hideous ruin and combustion that would fall—not on life, which is sublimely tolerant of such things, but on the world of “ views ” itself—if those who professed them were compelled by Act of Parliament to live up to their professions.

To an impartial outsider it would have been plain that Mary’s emancipated views, which appeared so appalling in the eyes of the excellent Baptist minister, were in point of fact relatively innocuous ; inasmuch as the primal necessities of eating, drinking, sleeping, and following the multiplication-table placed an impassable barrier between them and their practical application.

When, however, Mary began to write for the stage, the grounds of this security were undermined. She now learned that her

views could be acted—on the stage. The best actors of the day acted them; packed houses applauded; they flung bouquets when she appeared before the curtain; the newspapers next morning said variously that her play was “a work of Art,” “a candid and scathing exposure of real motives,” “a rebuke to our social hypocrisy,” “the trumpet-call of a new age,” “psychologically true,” “true in the higher sense of truth,” “a transcript of life—as life would be if men were honest with themselves.”

Hitherto Mary's views of life had been things to talk about, to argue for, to wax witty in defending—but now they took form in breathing men and women; she saw them as trees walking; the “fierce glare” of the footlights brought out their solidity; they showed their force in the shifting of the scenery; at their bidding a drawing-room in Mayfair was changed into a deer-forest in the Highlands, and a divorce court into a terrace at Monte Carlo; they ruined an American millionaire, and outwitted the cleverest detective in New York; they unfrocked a priest, horsewhipped a villain, enabled kindred souls to break down

stupid barriers of British Law ; caused a father to confess his sins to a daughter, a bishop to apologise to a burglar, and an earl to accept a stable-boy for his son-in-law ; the very thunders rolled at their command ; and they clothed the heroine in the daintiest of frocks. When Mary's views had worked these miracles two hundred and fifty times, she felt that they were potent to the moving of the world. She was no longer simply the holder of a theory, but the mistress of a going concern.

From that moment dangers began to gather and thicken round Mary's path. So long as her emancipation had remained at the theoretical stage, I had harboured no fears for her future, and had even predicted that she would marry a curate ; for I had seen enough of life to know that for certain natures the merely speculative interest in wickedness is one of the most innocent forms in which original sin can find a vent—just as, on the other hand, the merely speculative interest in goodness is often the precursor of all that is mean in the day's work. I had often discussed this with Mary ; but now I see that it was a matter on which I should have been

better advised to hold my tongue; for Mary, secretly agreeing with what I said and conscious that her emancipation was nothing but a pose, began to cast about for means to take herself more seriously, and once at least came perilously near to scorching herself in the fire with which she played. But the innate purity of the young girl had saved her, as it saves thousands who have less of it than she. Mary, in her way, was like the Man in Black of Goldsmith's immortal sketch. She loved to fancy herself the wickedest woman alive; but the core of the creature was of the finest gold. The libertine was afraid of her, and kept aloof; but the wretched of her own sex were drawn to her, as by a spell. Forget not, O Recording Angel, to make mention on the Judgment Day of Mary's private mission to the miserable night-walkers of the London streets!

"It's the most sporting thing I do," she said to me. "You have to be as wily as a cat, and as quick too. I've caught over twenty already—some of 'em regular Turks, but others—O my God! broken all to little bits."

"How do you do it, Mary?"

“A little hymn of my own composing. Wouldn't be any use to you.”

“But you know it's highly dangerous. These women are watched by men—ferocious bullies—who'd kill you if——”

“*Would* they?” said Mary. “Let 'em try! Look at that.” She opened a drawer and showed me a bright little revolver and a box of cartridges. She went on: “You see, they provide me with subjects—sometimes. The best notions in *The Fall of Polly* came from one of them. Philanthropy—oh dear, no! Not for me. And yet I don't know how I should get on without Old Stephens, the slum-missionary. He pulls me through at the finish. But Stephens can't *catch* 'em. That's *my* little game! Know Stephens? Well, he's the only good man there is left in the world. Never bullies me—as you do. No lectures. No warnings. Oh, Stephens is a brick! If I wasn't myself I'd like to be Stephens—and no one else.”

I have said that Mary was approaching the zone of danger. The following is a telegraphic summary of what took place. I leave to the reader's imagination the easy



task of filling in the sordid details, if he thinks them of any account ; but for my part not all the revilings of outraged Art shall extract from me anything more than what is here set down.

Prominent among Mary's male friends at this time was a certain Doctor—a mental pathologist. He was married to a stupid and austere woman with whom he did not exchange a dozen words a day ; and he had children. These two gifted simpletons—Mary and the Doctor—now began to play the perilous game of “kindred souls.” Their minds crammed with “views,” and thickly overlaid with secondary impressions, they ignored the real forces which dominated their relationship, and, taking account of everything except what lay immediately under their noses, they presently persuaded themselves that their destinies were linked under a common star. In due time—naturally a short time—the Doctor had confided to Mary the tragedy of his life—to wit, his marriage ; had consulted her in the handling of his most intimate difficulties, and, in fine, appointed her the presiding genius of his life. Mary reciprocated these confidences, submitted her “views” to the

Doctor's criticism; and rewrote the third act of her new play under his direction.

Thus without much difficulty they managed to create a situation which bore a remarkable resemblance to the opening scenes of *The Fall of Polly*. When they were apart, each of them would dramatically construct a future in which the sequence of events was determined according to the pattern of Polly's Fall; and when they met, there would be a period of silence in which the imagination of each was busy in rehearsing the coming scenes, as though the thing were to be produced at the Haymarket next week. The moment Mary heard the Doctor's step on the stairs an unconscious impulse lifted her from her chair, placed her erect by the fire, with one foot on the fender and one arm on the chimney-piece—the very attitude taken by the fallen Polly, at two hundred and fifty successive performances, as she waited for Count Petrarch in the cottage by the Thames. The Doctor, on his part, marched down the street to the accompaniment of a mixed and broken rhythm, composed partly of visual images, partly of stage eloquence, in which bishops apologised to burglars,

millionaires handed over their hoards, earls killed fatted calves for stable-boys, hypocritical society confessed itself unmasked, and souls rushed together at the meeting of the lips.

As they sat and talked together, they were, in their own eyes, two spiritual beings of an exalted order, aiding each other's flight to a promised Paradise, where they would walk for ever, hand in hand, among the flowers: artists in life, magicians, masters of destiny, heralds of a new enlightenment, joint heirs of the Golden Age. Thus were they in their own eyes. But, in the eye of sober sense, they were two frail organisms of human flesh, slowly moving to destruction under the pressure of those elementary instincts which society has been seeking to restrain, at infinite cost of blood and woe, since the first dawn of man's intelligence. And the Furies were already mustering among the low clouds on the edge of the horizon, and whispering to one another that there was game afoot.

*The Fall of Polly*, as handled by Mary's decadent "Art," and motivated by her spurious psychology, had been an extremely gorgeous and triumphant affair, in which

events came in to the tunes of seductive music and went out, so to say, in explosions of coloured stars. I am sorry to say that the part of Mary's actual history to which we are now come cannot be presented in this manner.

Were it my business to dramatise what took place I should have to manage the "idealisation" on quite another principle. To represent by appropriate stage effects the real inner nature of these events, and their true connection with one another, I should look for my symbolism in a region neither sweet-scented nor picturesque. I should lay the scenes, not on the sunlit terraces of Monte Carlo, but in sordid back yards and by the margin of rotten fens. I would clothe my heroine in no dainty gowns; the female parts I would give to harpies, the male to fat-headed schoolboys with breaking voices. I would light the theatre with phosphorus, and a troop of braying asses should be my orchestra. I would open the play by making all the characters announce their need of a bath—and their firm determination not to take one; the second act should turn on a desperate search for a piece of lost soap; and I would

then draw on the action to a tremendous crisis in which the leading schoolboy, who had hidden the soap, should be soundly birched in public.

Now this, I admit, has little external resemblance to what actually took place; none the less it jumps more evenly with the inner truth of Mary's experience than any scheme of symbolism in which sweet-faced girls and upstanding men should play a part, or any transaction which could be represented as taking place with a sunset for canopy or soft music for accompaniment.

I must now leave the reader to interpret my symbolism as he will, and to draw his own conclusion as to the details of the crisis.

When the news of Mary's flight with the Doctor had been finally confirmed, I betook myself for consolation to the presence of Old Stephens, the slum-missionary. Old Stephens was not a person of great intelligence, nor of exceptional spiritual gifts. I knew that his mouth would be filled with commonplace, and that was the reason I sought him out. For it seemed to me at that moment that a commonplace mind was precisely the best fitted to deal faith-

fully with the situation; and I had been irritated by certain other persons of intelligence and culture who, having heard of Mary's lapse, had immediately turned it into a theme for subtle discourse on the sex-problem,—of all subjects the most unprofitable to me.

One of my friends in particular had greatly annoyed me. He was a person who prided himself on his knowledge of feminine psychology, and had written a book called *The Place of Woman in the Society of the Future*—a work of extraordinary prophetic skill which already caused several otherwise sensible women to begin anticipating events, thereby making themselves extremely ridiculous and troublesome. This gentleman honoured me with a visit for the purpose of explaining how the conduct of Mary confirmed and illustrated one of the subtlest points of his theory. I forget what the theory was; and I refrain from any attempt to recover it, lest in so doing I should confuse it with some other on the same subject, of which I have heard several scores, and should thus do the author a wrong.

Incapable of criticising his arguments, bored to death by his subtleties, and appalled

by his callousness—for he had a heart of stone—I became hungry for human commonplace; and to Old Stephens I accordingly went.

“She was the one bright spot in my life,” said Old Stephens—“a very depressing life, I assure you, and a very fatiguing one too. We see such terrible evils. Grace alone enables us to endure—and Grace can do all things. I hope you believe that, sir. There’s nothing else to cling to in this wicked world. Grace will find Mary even yet—never doubt it for a moment. It’s impossible that my prayers, and her father’s—and I hope yours too, sir—will remain unanswered. Mary will yet be dedicated to the Lord. She’s not under reprobation—only under chastisement. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. But it’s a heavy cloud—a very dark, heavy cloud. It’s hard to lose the one bright spot in your life. I took it to the Lord at once and He said, ‘My grace shall be sufficient for thee’—and for Mary too—not a doubt of it.

“I’ve often tried to speak to her of Sacred Things. But, oh, these clever people! they won’t listen. And so many

of them nowadays! I greatly doubt if all this education is doing good. I can assure you that it helps *us* very little. The poor are none the better for it. You should see the things they read! I often wish they couldn't read. It's a very great hindrance to the cause of Christ—especially with the young. And the rich are growing very careless. Of course, there are many that help; but there are more that don't. But Mary wasn't like that. She helped. Helped in the most practical way—yes, the most courageous way—I can assure you. I wish I could tell you about that—but she made me promise not to. Some of the very worst cases I have ever had to do with have turned out well—all her doing. She only pretended she was wicked. She was good—I know it. And she's good still—in spite of all; you can take my word.

“‘Mary,’ I said to her once—I’ve known her from a child—‘Mary, look into your own heart, and see if the work of Grace has not already begun.’ ‘Uncle Steve,’ she said, ‘my religion’s the Future. We’re building the Future, when there’ll be no more slums, and no more people like Fanny Starr’—that was one of the cases I just



referred to. 'Mary,' I said, 'leave the Future to Him in whose hands it is, and attend to the present. Now is the day of salvation.'

"It was not often I could get a little serious talk like that. But you'll admit, sir, that her remark showed a good heart—a heart ripe for the work of Grace. She saved others; herself she couldn't save. Oh, it's a terrible danger to be a beautiful woman. If I had a beautiful daughter I'd never have a moment's peace. But it's the Lord who makes them beautiful, and the Lord will make allowance; depend upon it He'll make allowance. A vast number of these cases come under my notice—for my work lies largely among the fallen—and I've come to the conclusion that allowance *must* be made. You see a woman's face is like a *force*—you can't control it—you never know what it's going to do next—*they* don't know themselves—nobody knows; and is it reasonable to think that they'll be made accountable for all it does? No, sir. Allowance will be made—there's not a doubt of it."

Thus the innocent creature—if an old hero may be so described—continued to

babble. When he had done, I went away comforted, and not without hope for Mary.

### III

THE experiences through which Mary had now to pass were not true to sample—what human experience ever is? The psychological diagram on which she had based *The Fall of Polly*, and the gorgeous colours with which she had overlaid it, were not reproduced. The Manager of the Theatre seemed to have completely forgotten the whole scheme of stage-setting with which he had been provided. The scene-painters indulged in a reckless originality. Instead of the terrace at Monte Carlo they painted the Brompton Road. The dresses were all wrong. The scenes came on anyhow. The bishop did not apologise to the burglar. No American millionaire took the slightest notice of the offending couple. Hypocritical society did not confess itself unmasked. The detective was not outwitted—on the contrary, he did his work with conspicuous success. The Uniformity of Nature, and the invariability of the psychological order, which had been

so convincingly illustrated by two hundred and fifty successive performances, came completely to grief at the two hundred and fifty-first. The Reign of Law seemed to be suddenly invaded by confusion. In short, the whole thing was a surprise—an extremely unpleasant one to the persons principally concerned.

To begin with, the deserted wife did not accept her position, and her family showed not the slightest respect for the categorical imperatives of the New Morality. They set the law in motion, hypocrites as they were. And the law gave them all they wanted—and was remarkably quick about it. Five thousand pounds was the sum which the erring Doctor was required to pay down immediately for the support of his family. Also, he was commanded to restore certain securities which he had somehow managed to withdraw from the custody of his wife's trustees. Both these demands were extremely embarrassing, for the Doctor was unable to fulfil either of them. So he borrowed a first instalment from Mary, and a further sum with which he proceeded to speculate on the Stock Exchange—on inside information. Most of this he lost in a

month. Then Mary turned disagreeable; the Doctor reciprocated, and even went so far as to hint that it was she who had got him into this trouble. That made Mary more disagreeable than before. Had you seen Mary and the Doctor at breakfast six weeks after their return, you would never have suspected that they were kindred souls!

The deserted wife had a brother in Western Canada. As this young gentleman's time was divided between the rounding-up of cattle, the clearing of forests, and occasional appearances as a heavy-weight boxer, he was naturally unable to keep abreast of the New Morality, and his education fell sadly into arrears. Hearing what had taken place, he resolved to come home and investigate matters, bringing with him no weapons save his fists. He felt sure he would be wanted.

The Doctor returning one night to his lodgings saw standing near the door a well-featured, fresh-faced youth, some six foot two in his stockings, with exceedingly broad shoulders, and with large violet eyes that moved slowly and glittered. The Doctor

failed to recognise the giant, so the giant introduced himself. "I'm Joe," said he. "Guess I've grown some since you saw me. Look here, Doc: you're too little to *hit*, so I'm just going to *slap* you." And the Doctor stayed in bed for a week.

The duty of poulticing her wounded knight ought to have devolved on Mary. But this unnatural female by no means relished the task, and deputed it to the landlady. The landlady's poultices were always either much too hot or much too cold; and her manners were equally unsympathetic. The wounded man repeatedly summoned Mary to the sick-chamber: but Mary refused to come.

The position of this unfortunate man was one which even better men than he might be forgiven for sustaining with little credit; and I have often thought that to him also some extension is due of the principle which lay at the root of Old Stephens' philosophy—the principle that "allowance will be made." He was not a bad man, any more than Mary was a bad woman. I am sure of this; for, though I never knew him personally, a friend of mine who is a strong defender of his character told me a thing about him

which carries conviction on the face of it. Once my friend had been robbed of all his money while travelling in Italy, and found himself together with his sick wife in a very embarrassing position. The Doctor, who happened to be in the same town, hearing of his misfortune, came over to the hotel where he was staying, and, without making any inquiries, promptly lent him forty pounds.

Had the Eumenides left him alone, I think that he would have managed in the long length to give a good account of himself—as good, at all events, as most of his judges are likely to produce. But disappointment had been his secret portion for many years; and the lot was all the harder to endure because its bitterness was not apparent to the outward eye. That marriage of his had been in very truth a tragedy; but a tragedy of which the full significance was from the nature of the case incommunicable, being entirely unsupported by outward evidence of one kind or another.

I hope the reader will not accuse me of lax morality when I say that the discovery in Mary of a person to whom he might tell the truth was, to this poor man,

a temptation which might tax the integrity of an accomplished saint; and who can wonder that the effect of that communication was to force the pace in their relationship to a degree beyond all human foresight or control? It was as though a young horse had bolted.

As a thing in the doing, all this had been exhilarating, gorgeous, and absolutely novel. As a thing done, it was sordid, leaden-eyed, and stale as any piece of carrion-flesh. This view of it, which often lingers in the coming, had been forced on the Doctor by the experience of a few weeks; for the handling of the Furies had been rapid as well as rough.

As he lay in his sunless room in the Brompton Road, an appalling sense of helplessness weighed him down. Physical force, in the person of Joe Sydenham, stood over against him; and the thought of it was humiliation. Fortune, ever against him in the past, had not responded to his last throw by changing the game. He had lost his money. Mary had turned the heel upon him. The rebel forces of society had not come to his support; they had left him to fight his battles alone; and the stars in their courses

were fighting against him. The desperate sortie against his limitations, by which he had attempted to break the leaguer of his life, had come to naught; they had beaten him back, and here he was shattered and shamed, deserted and perennially defeated; his moral resistance broken by bodily suffering; his mental vitality reduced to that woeful state of depression and enfeeblement when the microbes of devilish thought have things their own way.

In the subconscious deeps of the soul of a civilised man lie many things besides the intimations of God and Immortality. Some of the resurrections from that region are not of a kind to increase a man's respect for himself. Moreover, the gates of the prison-house are none too securely barred, and a close watch needs to be kept. And there are times when, under the pressure of exceptional misfortunes in the upper regions, the gates below give way altogether, and the whole bestial population escapes. Then the work of the ages is undone. Down go the ill-built walls of self-restraint; the shops of philosophy are sacked; the house of argument is demolished; and the central citadel of the self, thinly manned and



taken unawares, is rushed by the devil and his hosts.

So it happened to our poor friend, the Doctor. There was a church-clock in the Brompton Road, whose chimes, as they rang the quarters, had a peculiar mocking sound which suggested the cheerful insolence of an idiot. At every stroke of this detestable clock, there came into the Doctor's consciousness an uprush of subliminal infamy. His heart beat with a slow and ugly rhythm; the weight grew heavier on his chest; and sinister irritations began to prick and tingle along the cortex of his brain.

It was inevitable that the amorphous mass of conscious misery which now did duty for the Doctor's soul should sooner or later reconstitute itself in definite shape. A suggestion was all that was needed; and the suggestion was given by a chance remark of the sour-faced woman who attended to his hurts.

"Get out!" said this doughty representative of her sex, in response to some moan of misery from the Doctor's lips. "Get out! You'll soon be all right. And then you can get your own back again." From that hour the Doctor's thoughts began

to turn on vengeance—it seemed the only pleasant thing to think about.

To revenge himself on the big brother was not easy ; so he resolved, in his madness, to revenge himself on Mary. As soon, therefore, as he was able to walk downstairs, he gathered his forces together, flung himself into the sitting-room where Mary was trying to write a novel, and, without more ado, dealt her a brutal blow. Then he rushed out of the house, bought a revolver, and, retiring to a neighbouring bar, drank whiskey till he was intoxicated. Returning to the house, he found Mary crying by the fire. “Take that!” he said, and fired three shots at the crouching figure. Fortunately, none of them took effect ; seeing which the staggering wretch turned the weapon on himself—and died.

#### IV

Two years after these events I received a sudden visit from Mary.

“I want to consult you,” she said. “I’ve had an offer of marriage. Read that.”

She handed me a letter written in a bold, firm hand. It ran as follows :—

“R. M. D. No. 3,

“BIG TREE,

“ALT, CANADA.

“DEAR MARY,—I have sold my quarter-section as I told you I should. It made 25 dollars an acre, though I asked 30. But 25 is all right when you remember that it was a free homestead to begin with. Since that I've bought a whole section on the Fish Creek, and I tell you it's good land. It's a sure thing too, because the C.P. is building a branch on the line of the Creek, so you see I'm going to make good. I've got some fine shorthorns and a pedigree bull, but I'm going strongest on horses. There's a grand range back of the farm, and the riding is first chop. Poultry pay fine here, only you must have the right sort. Forty-six acres were broken and we broke 56 more, that's 102, and we have a fine crop on breaking. The oats will make 80 bushels to the acre. So you see it's just a bit of real all-right. It's a first-class outfit except for one thing—there's no wife.

“Mary, I believe you're just the one for me. And you needn't fear that I should ever let you down. I shouldn't; and if you write to the Rev. Mr Poyntz, Presbyterian Minister, Calgary, Alt, Canada, he'll tell you I'm straight. I've been some in rows, but I never done anything crooked, at least not to matter, and we know how

to treat a woman out here. We don't keep them in cotton-wool; but that's not your way, and you're sure to like it. The only thing a lady might feel is the mosquitoes, but you soon get used to them; and the water in our well is a bit brackish, but I'll fix that before you come. It's a good house, frame-built by Spragg of Lethbridge, and there's a little mare that you can have for your own. Don't be afraid of the winter; you'll never catch cold, not even when it's 40 below, and you'll feel better than you ever did.

“Mary, I hope you've forgiven me for slapping that man. But look at the way he served Edith; and you know I was never against you even when all the rest of our bunch was. I want you not to be against me, but come out as I say, and I'll go East to meet you, and we'll soon find some one to fix us. It's a grand country, and I'm up against a sound proposition. I always liked you, Mary, from the very first minute, and you can help considerable if you come. Send a cable if it's yes, and address Big Tree.—I remain, yours faithfully,

“JOE SYDENHAM.”

“Well?” said Mary, as I reread the letter, “I observe a smile on the countenance of the sage.”

“Mary, you’re up against a sound proposition.”

“Pooh! that’s mere *business*. I want to know how it looks from the point of view of Art.”

“Joe Sydenham knows nothing about Art,” I said.

“No great artist ever did,” answered Mary.

“That’s not true, but I’m glad you believe it. You didn’t once; but now I see you’re converted.”

“I don’t feel in the least like a returning Prodigal, however,” said Mary, “and I’m not bothering about my sins.”

“You’re wandering from the point, Mary, as every woman does when there’s no one to check her. You asked how this offer of marriage looked from the point of view of Art. And I’m going to tell you that in that respect also it’s a sound proposition. Accept the offer and you’ll create a surprise, which is what great Art always does.”

“But all the literary people will laugh—all except three,” said Mary.

“What will the three do?”

“Commit suicide, according to their own account; make up to the next pretty girl, according to mine.”

“Oho!” I said, “that complicates matters. Well, how do the merits of the three compare with Joe’s?”

“Joe’s worth the whole bunch.”

“A suspicious Canadianism!” I said. “Mary, you’ve made up your mind—why consult me?”

“A great artist is not above criticism. I want to know what the stupid British Public will think. So I come to you.”

“Thank you, Mary. You’ve done that before. And now is there anything else I can do for you?”

“Don’t be offended yet,” said Mary, “for I haven’t nearly reached the point. Yes—there is something else you can do for me.”

“What’s that?”

“Lend me half a sovereign—I’m desperately hard-up.”

“What do you want half a sovereign for?”

“To cable to Joe.”

“Mary, it’s a gift,” I said, handing her the coin.

“Make it a sov. then,” said Mary, “and I’ll send him a longer cable. I want to test Joe on his own ground.”

We sat down and composed the cable together. After many rejected alternatives, it finally ran: "Yes: I have no money: send some. Sailing *Empress* 26 September." I have never been engaged in a more difficult effort of composition.

"Looks sordid, indelicate, and all that," said Mary, "but it's a grand test. It'll show whether he trusts me."

"Better than all the lovers' vows that have been breathed since the world began," I answered.

Next day I received a note from Mary, enclosing a telegram. It was Joe's answer. "Hurrah!" said the telegram, "sending 500 dollars: more, if possible: will meet you Quebec: get fixed Montreal: loving JOE."

## V

To say that Mary and Joe were married and lived happily ever afterwards would be premature. They were married, indeed, some years ago; but the end is not yet. It is therefore quite open to any prophet of the New Morality to predict a disastrous issue to the enterprise. Mary's genius may

rebel against its new environment, and she may run away with another kindred soul flung by chance on to a Canadian prairie. Joe may prove a stupid brute and take to drink. Personally, having made investigations on the spot, I don't think that any one of these things is likely to happen. However, I won't prophesy, but content myself with reporting that up-to-date developments have been satisfactory.

On a scorching day in August 1909, I set out on horseback from Calgary to find Joe's "location." A journey of thirty-one miles, most of it through an Indian Reserve, lay before me. On the map the route seemed perfectly easy, and I accordingly rejected the suspicious help of a "real-estate man," who had offered to ride with me and show me the way. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that all the real-estate men in Calgary had learned—how I know not—of my intended journey, and had developed an extraordinary concern for my welfare. Three of them, I heard privately, were watching the livery stables at which I had ordered my horse, and had their teams in readiness to follow me whenever I should happen to start. This led to my seeking



an interview with the keeper of the stables, who, for consideration paid down, agreed to deliver me from my pursuers. My horse was accordingly brought round to the hotel at five in the morning, and I managed to get out of the city unobserved. I was subsequently informed that the real-estate men, in spite of all precautions, were apprised of my departure by seven o'clock, and actually started in pursuit. However, as I took the wrong way and they took the right one, we never met, and I had the pleasure of learning that they had been rewarded for their professional zeal by a night out on the plains.

I carried two big saddle-bags filled with presents from English friends — belated wedding presents, for Mary had got herself “fixed” in Montreal before the most of us knew what she was after. In one of these bags was a large brown-paper parcel which had been consigned to my care by old Mrs Stephens, the wife of the slum-missionary. It came from a Refuge for fallen women, and was a gift from certain of the inmates who had reasons for being grateful to Mary. This piece of baggage had caused me some trouble with the Custom House officials at

Quebec, who, in the presence of my fellow-passengers, truculently challenged me to explain what I was doing with a dozen baby's frocks. But there it was in my saddle-bag—and I reflected somewhat proudly on the fact as I loped along through the rolling land-billows of the Indian Reserve, bathed in the vast silence of the wilderness.

From time to time I consulted the map, to ascertain where I was. But presently I reached a point of bewilderment when I might as well have consulted the Thirty-Nine Articles. That I was somewhere behind the Back of Beyond was evident enough, but where precisely, who could say? I had calculated that I should reach my destination in six hours; I had now ridden for seven; the sun was blazing, the vast distances were shimmering in the heat, and the tortures of thirst had commenced. My powerful horse, too, was beginning to flag. It was clear I had lost the trail. Two hours ago I ought to have passed out of the Reserve, but the tepees of Indians were still visible on the bluffs ahead of me. Another hour of weary riding, in which I steered by the sun, brought me to a wire fence; this was the limit of the Reserve.

Taking out a field-glass, I saw in the opal distance a yellow patch on the side of a vast sweep of rolling down. I jumped the fence, and made for the distant patch of yellow, learning by the way that a straight line is not always the shortest distance between two points. A black dot which had long been visible at the edge of the patch gradually assumed the shape of a man, and the patch declared itself a breadth of ripened oats. As I drew nearer, the man paused to watch my approach, his hand shading his eyes. Presently he hailed me in a mighty voice—

“ Want to buy my land ? ”

“ No.”

“ Are you real estate ? ”

“ No.”

“ Then who the —— are you ? ”

“ I’ve lost my way, and I’d give fifty dollars for a drink of water.”

“ Great snakes ! You’re an Englishman ! ”

By this time we were face to face. He was a brawny young man of about twenty-eight. What clothes he wore were rags. His chest was bare, and as he jumped from the seat of his “ Massey-Harris ”—he was

working a binder—I noticed that one leg of his trousers was missing. He jumped, I say, to the ground, cut a caper, whooped and hollo'd, and then flung his old straw hat a prodigious height into the air. Catching the hat, he handed it to me and pointed to the faded ribbon, of which some fragments still remained.

“Clifton College,” I said.

“Sure thing!” he roared; “wouldn't part with it for a wagon-load of dollar-bills. My name's Stockwell. Come right in to the shack.”

“Give me some water,” I gasped.

“The water ain't fit to drink. It's a mixture of Epsom Salts and Backache Pills. I'll make you some tea before you can say 'skat' three times.”

When the tea was made—than which nothing more grateful was ever offered to the weary—I told him that I wanted to find Joe Sydenham.

“Sure thing!” he said. “Ten miles behind the bluff. I'll go with you. Joe Sydenham!” and his roar of laughter shook the roof; “Joe Sydenham! And Joe's wife! Wonder where Joe struck that girl! I'd swap the whole section for

another such. Say, do you want to make a deal? Go back to the Old Country and send me one like Mary, and I'll give you the land with the standing crops, the implements, the stock, and the shack, without a red cent between us."

"Ah, but there isn't another Mary," I said.

"Send me one half as good then!" he shouted.

"I'll think it over. But don't forget that I'm perishing of starvation."

"Great Scot, and I'm out of stores! There isn't a thing to eat in the shack but a sackful of old bread and a bucket of raspberry jam."

"I'm longing for old bread and raspberry jam."

The fellow was boiling over with animal spirits and could not restrain himself. To all my questions he would first reply by a roar of laughter and a caper; after which he would make a feeble effort to be intelligible, breaking off in the middle with a whoop, or sometimes, I must confess, with a mouthful of tremendous oaths.

Presently, after tipping a second cupful of raspberry jam on to my tin plate, he clapped

on his old hat and rushed like a mad thing out of the shack. For a few moments I heard him running about; there was a sound of ramming; a big laugh was smothered; a match was struck; and then suddenly, from just beneath the little window, there came a tremendous detonation which sent the few remaining panes of glass flying all over the room, and shook both the shack and myself to our respective foundations.

“Great heavens!” I cried, “what’s that?”

“I’ve fired the cannon. Guess it’s startled you some. Well—that’s my signal to the boys that I’ve struck an Englishman! If there’s any of them riding within five miles they’ll be here in half an hour.”

“Will Joe hear it?”

“Will if he’s out on the range. Guess he may be to-day.”

With my companion I went outside, and we gazed forth into the surrounding wilderness. Westward, at an immense distance, the Rockies swam high in the liquid air—an immense congregation of peaks bounding the horizon. They were the Delectable Mountains, and the regions between us

and them was the Land of Beulah. It rose in vast terraces, sweeping upward and upward as though to make a ladder to the sky. Earth, air, and sky formed, as it were, a continuous mass of opalescence, swimming with a kind of rhythmical movement in an ocean of light. Throughout the whole expanse, North, South, East, and West, not a living thing was stirring; not a human dwelling, not a human being, was visible.

“Guess I’ll fire the cannon again,” said my host.

“Wait,” I answered, “there’s a moving speck on the skyline yonder.”

Stockwell took the glass from my hand.

“By thunder,” he shouted, “it’s one of the boys! And there’s another in the creek-bottom away to the left. They’re coming this way. Here, take the glass and keep them in sight. I’ll go and kill a veal. We shall have the whole bunch down on us for supper.”

While I watched the riders, the uproarious Stockwell whetted his knife and began to kill. The riders were converging toward a point in the valley which led upward to the farm. Presently they met, and raced

up the valley side by side. As they drew nearer, I, continuing to watch them through the glass, became dimly aware that they were diversely habited—and a thought flashed into my mind.

“Stockwell,” I shouted, “come here; there’s a man and a woman.”

Stockwell instantly came out of the stable, his hands red with blood—and I heard something kicking inside.

“Give me the glass,” he said in a strangely hollow voice; and a moment after, “By ——! it’s Joe and Mary.” And something like a groan escaped him.

I was amazed at the sudden change in the man. His spirits had collapsed, and his jolly face had become chop-fallen as that of any dweller in the twilight.

“Here you,” he said, “go in and finish that veal”—and he gave me some directions—“I’m sick—*real* sick. They’ll be here in five minutes. *Tell* ’em I’m sick. They won’t see *me*! I’m in that loft till they go—*real* sick, you understand!”

“What on earth do you mean?” I said, as Stockwell began to climb the ladder which led to his hay-loft.

“It’s Mary,” he said. “Can’t stand it.



Never could. Mary makes me feel that *mean*—mean as a yeller dog. Don't want to see 'em. She belongs to Joe. She can't belong to me. And Joe and me are good friends. So what's the good? See?" With these words Stockwell plunged into his hay, and drew back the sliding-door of the loft.

The calf was bleeding in the byre, and Stockwell (I could hear him) was blubbering in the hay. But Stockwell and the calf were alike blotted from my thoughts; for the two riders had leaped the fence, swung themselves from their saddles, and Mary, Joe, and I tumbled confusedly into one another's arms.

What words were first spoken I forget—there was some incoherence. After a little we disentangled ourselves. Standing apart, I looked at the pair; and I laughed for joy, and shouted like a fool.

"The Superman," I cried, "and the Superwoman! You gorgeous beings! You make me sick—real sick."

"Where's old Stock?" said Joe.

"Sick," I said, "real sick. We're all sick—except you. Civilisation's sick; England's sick; America's sick. Joe and

Mary! You make me feel that *mean*—mean as a yeller dog!”

Here there was an audible groan from the hay-loft.

“Is Stock up there?” said Joe, pointing to the loft.

“Yes,” I answered; and Joe and Mary laughed.

“He won’t come down,” said Joe; “we’ll have to fix things for ourselves.”

“There’s a calf somewhere,” I said, “which Stockwell had just begun to kill when his seizure came on. You’d better put it out of its misery, Joe.”

Joe departed, and Mary and I were left alone.

“Is it a sound proposition, Mary?” I asked.

“Sound as the heart of the universe,” was the quick answer.

“The calf’s kind o’ dead,” said Joe, coming out of the stable. He went to the ladder of Stockwell’s hay-loft and climbing a rung or two called out, “Say, Stock, what’ll you take for that veal?”

“Ten dollars,” answered a rueful voice.

Joe thrust a ten-dollar bill under the door. “Got it?” he said.

“Sure thing!” replied the voice.

“We’ll take the veal home,” said Joe; and he descended the ladder.

“And now,” I said, “tell me the latest news of the son and heir.”

“The latest news,” replied Mary, “is that he’s left at home with the two dogs to look after him.”

“We’ve trained ’em to do it,” said Joe. “You shall see ’em. One on each side of him. Careful of him as though he was a pet pig.”

“That reminds me of something,” I said. “Mary, I’ve two saddle-bags full of wedding presents for you—and the boy.”

“I must see them at once,” cried Mary. “No, stupid, I can’t wait. Give the horses half an hour’s rest, and I will go into the shack and look at the presents. Oh, never mind old Stock! Half an hour in the hay will improve his philosophy.”

We went into the shack, and the saddle-bags were emptied. Mary examined the parcels one by one—with shouts of delight. I kept to the last the big package on which the Custom House had frowned so ominously.

“From whom does this come?” said Mary. “Oh, here’s a letter inside.”

Mary read the letter, which had seven or eight scrawling signatures at the end of it. She then folded her arms on the greasy table, and, burying her face in the crook of her elbow, burst into tears.

## VI. "THAT SORT OF THING"

JOE SYDENHAM'S younger brother Tom was a Master of Arts. None the less it is beyond dispute that there was no nameable "Art," of one kind or another, in which Tom had attained the rank even of a novice. Taking him all round, he was one of the most ignorant of young men. He was also one of the most incapable, and his incapacity was so obtrusive and troublesome that even a D.D. would hardly have disguised it from the most careless observer.

*Omnis determinatio est negatio* is certainly the right principle for defining Tom. Call him Master of Arts if you will, but with the proviso that the diploma indicates everything which Tom Sydenham was not. To think of him is to think of the negative, with what implied affirmative the thinker's philosophy may charitably insert. He was not clever and he was not stupid; he was

not virtuous and he was not vicious ; he was not idle and he was not industrious. His place was in the mid region where positive qualities fade into their opposites, and wherever there is an exact frontier line dividing them from one another, Tom Sydenham was on that line. You might summarise him in words that were applied to the coddled apple of Lord Chesterfield's eye : " he was one of those young men of whom it suffices to say there is nothing to be said."

And yet I cannot refrain from the temptation to say something about him, superfluous though it be. Frankly, I have been more interested in Tom than in many young men of more positive tendencies and more brilliant parts. Had you known him you would have loved him as I did, though you would hardly have known why. The fact is that no one could help pitying Tom, and perhaps that was the reason people loved him. They felt, rather than understood, that he was a victim ; that " society " had made him what he was ; that the Order of the Universe owed him some amends. Let me anticipate by saying that the " amends " have already been paid to the first instalment. Tom is going

to win through; though I would hardly have believed it ten years ago—when he first appeared as a Master of Arts.

Tom's father was a wealthy man, and he had spared no expense on his son's education. The boy began in what is acknowledged to be the best Preparatory School in Great Britain. The Head-master has four degrees, the last of which is LL.D.; he has edited Quintilian; he is devoted to young boys; a delightful person and a great organiser. There are twelve assistant masters: three are Varsity Blues; all are scholars of their respective Colleges, except M. Albert de Bussac, who teaches French and German. The matron is the daughter of a Bishop, and combines the airs of a Duchess with a keen professional eye for sore throats, burst braces, and missing flannel shirts. The school buildings are the work of sanitary science and art; there are twenty acres of grounds; and the view from the cricket fields is one of the finest in England. The Sanatorium is perfect, insomuch that parents, as they are shown round, look forward with pleasure to the time when Augustus or Septimus will have the measles. As a rule they have not long to wait. And the fees are one hundred and fifty

guineas per annum—with an unlimited range of appetising “extras,” all calculated in “guineas.”

Some years ago a Japanese gentleman who was studying English educational methods was taken over this school by one of its enthusiastic admirers. Needless to say he insisted upon seeing everything, and took voluminous notes of what he saw. Moreover, he had a Kodak, and he snapshotted right and left. He studied the time-table and copied it. He sat still for a whole hour while the master of the Upper Sixth expounded the *Phædo* to fifteen urchins. He inspected the kitchens and even tasted the food. He had a brief conversation with a boot-boy. He watched a game of “footer” from start to finish. Throughout the whole of these investigations the Japanese gentleman remained provokingly silent, and his guide, who strove in vain to kindle the spark of enthusiasm, began to grow tired of his task. Finally, when the boys were gathered at dinner, the guide said, “Now, Mr Uchigasaki, run your eye along that row of faces, and tell me if you ever saw a happier lot of boys.”

“Velly good, velly good,” said Mr Uchi-



gasaki; "but is there anything wrong with the homes?"

Beyond a doubt the boys in that school were happy. "I've had a ripping good time" was the phrase which consoled the heart of many a fond parent as he counted up the hundreds of "guineas" the school had cost him. If your boy was clever he invariably passed into the Public School with a scholarship to his credit. If he was not clever nobody found it worth his while to make him miserable. Tom, as we have seen, was not clever, but that circumstance was never allowed to worry either him or his masters. If Tom didn't understand the lesson as it was explained to the clever boys he simply passed on to the next, which, of course, he didn't even try to understand. The consequence was that he found himself reading the *Phædo* while he was still shaky on the third declension, and was "doing" Conics in utter ignorance of the Rule of Three. The number of school-books Tom required was prodigious, and they were all charged at the full published price. By the time he had finished they filled a whole bookcase in his bedroom at home; but I greatly doubt if there was a single page in any one of

them which this future Master of Arts had mastered. There were four English Histories, one of 500 pages; there were seven Introductions to the French Language in various grades of introducing power; as to the Introductions to Greek and Latin Prose, and the '*Anglice Reddenda*,' they were thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. All these books were appallingly dirty, for Tom was an untidy boy, and their margins were scrawled over with Tom's name and with original designs for the human countenance. When the smash came in the Sydenham fortunes these books were sold to a second-hand dealer for a penny apiece: he took them away in a cart.

Once or twice his father, who was an accurate man of business, lost his temper and made mild complaint. 'Would it be possible,' he wrote to the Head-master, 'to give a little more attention to Tom's reading, writing, spelling, and cyphering (*sic*), in all of which he was distressingly backward? As it was probable Tom would go into business, these things were important. Moreover, he was very indistinct in his speech. Might not this be corrected by an occasional lesson in reading aloud? And would the

form-master kindly see that Tom sat upright at his desk, as he had contracted a bad habit of writing with his nose on the paper?' When the Head read the first part of that letter he frowned; when he came to "cyphering" he smiled; then he threw it in the fire. You might as well have asked the Duke of Wellington in the middle of the Battle of Waterloo to make sure that none of his soldiers was dropping his h's. Nevertheless the Head sent a polite answer, to the effect that the standards of education had risen so rapidly in recent years, and the timetable become so crowded with subjects, that it was almost impossible to reserve a separate place for those mentioned; that the boy would certainly pick them up sufficiently in the course of his other studies, and that this method would in the long-run lead to better results than the old-fashioned plan of teaching spelling by set lessons, etc. etc. This letter didn't cost the Head much trouble. He merely said to his typist, "AB, 14, Tom Sydenham," and the typist, who knew "AB, 14," by heart, dashed the thing off in fifteen seconds. So Tom continued to write home to his parents, week by week, that he had received

their letter, that he sor no good in Greek, that he had bort a moddle aroplain off a chap for twenty-five bob, jolly cheep, that he was getting on alright, that there were ten chaps with hooping coff in the Sanny, that he remaned their affectionate son—with three thumb-marks and five blots. Meanwhile, he was studying the dead languages for four hours a day, and having no end of fun with a three-guinea box of mathematical instruments, every one of which was lost by the end of the term, except the protractor, and that was broken.

While three or four boys at the top of the form were learning, through the medium of the classics, to become accurate scholars, Tom, with six or seven others at the other end, was acquiring, through the same medium, all the habits of a sloppy-minded bungler. "There *or thereabouts*" was always near enough for Tom, and much nearer than he usually arrived. A faint glimmering of what a classical author was driving at, the feeling that his prose "looked like" Latin, persuaded Tom that he had reached the standard proper for a chap like him and that his work would "do." For anything beyond that he never tried. Of style, dic-

tion, form, and the fitting of words to things and thoughts he learnt absolutely nothing. Of interest in the meaning or literary value of his authors he had not the least beginning. The lessons would have been unendurable but for the opportunity they afforded him of scrawling in the margin of his books and otherwise diverting himself while they were going on. Now and then he would scribble a bit of translation with his stylographic pen, which done he would dig Brown minor in the ribs, and the two would begin a competition in drawing the portrait of "old Bellasis" at the desk. "Old Bellasis," a strapping young athlete from Oxford, knew perfectly well what they were doing, and didn't care a cigarette. Once a month or so he would put Tom on to translate a bit of Cæsar or Ovid, in the expectation of a few first-class howlers for the subsequent delectation of the common-room. He was seldom disappointed, and, having attained his wish, he left Tom for another month to "pick up" what he could of classical lore.

Tom's mind, naturally inert, gradually became a mere mush. His untidiness grew upon him. In one term he lost seven

stylographic pens, four knives, and every one of his pocket-handkerchiefs. His cricket bat, his three cricket balls, his photographic camera, his watch, and his bicycle disappeared in rapid succession or came home in fragments. Whatever book, instrument, or toy Tom was using he would throw down in his tracks, leaving it where it fell. He had huge quantities of pocket-money, but it was all gone in a week or two, and neither Tom nor any one else knew what had become of it. He sometimes forgot the day of the week, and could seldom write the correct date on his weekly letter home. There was only one thing on which his mind was clear, and that was the principle that "anything would do." If you asked Tom what time work began, he would answer, "Oh, about nine o'clock and that sort of thing." Such was Tom Sydenham at the age of fourteen.

The Public School in which the next stage of Tom's education was accomplished was the Preparatory School writ large. Its fame is too illustrious and its methods too firmly established beyond the reach of criticism to call for either description or comment. The Head was a perfect Head ;

that is to say, he displayed every quality needed for the successful working of the system to which he was bound. The matron was, perhaps, a trifle more dignified than the matron of a Preparatory School could possibly be; more dignified, but with a less comprehensive grasp of buttons and shirts. The Blues were bluer and the Scholars more scholarly; the school-books more costly and more numerous; the Sanatorium more spacious and the measles more frequent; more time was given to the construing of Classical Authors and less concern displayed for the boys who couldn't construe them. The teaching of Mathematics and the Modern Languages on the Classical Side was a farce somewhat more candid and undisguised. Tom, who, of course, was at the bottom of his form, knew perfectly well that there was not a soul in the school, from the Head downwards, who took the slightest interest in him or his affairs. The only way to attract the official eye was to break the rules and incur punishment; but this Tom seldom did, for he was not a bad boy. Being the sort of person he was he would have resented any sign of interest in the

masters ; for the etiquette of the school, more rigid than any written code of laws, required him to present a face of brass to overtures from that quarter. Not that this part of the school etiquette was often put to the strain.

So far as education consists in teaching one to live in a world which is indifferent to his existence, there is no doubt that Tom was being splendidly educated, and when the pinch came this part of his training, as we shall see, stood him in good stead. Mr Chesterton has reminded us that the Public Schools are the only part of our educational system which knows distinctly what it wants to produce and produces it. If you have to govern an Empire such as ours you must manage to train up a sufficient body of men who make no fuss when they win and keep their tempers when they lose ; and to do this you must lay the foundation by implanting in the mind of the subject a clear conviction that he is a person of no importance. This was honestly and thoroughly done for Tom in return for an annual trifle of two hundred hard-earned guineas paid down by his father. And nobody can deny that it was worth a considerable sum of money.



In Westminster Abbey there is a monument to a stout seaman of the olden time, who, to judge by the sculptor's representation of him, appears to have gone into action attired in a mixed garb of Greek and Roman origin. That monument reminds me of our Public Schools. Their Greek and Latin has little more to do with their essential business than the good Captain's marble clothes had to do with his weathering of tempests, cannonading of forts, and breaking the enemy's line. As he did his duty, so they are doing theirs; and the duties have much in common. They betray an identity of meaning under a diversity of ritual.

Every fortnight Tom had to write an "essay" in preparation for the next stage of his progress towards Mastership of Arts—his arrival at which was taken for granted. These essays were returned to the writers next day duly ornamented with blue lines or blue notes of exclamation. The subject on one occasion was the "Fall of Greece," which Tom delineated in two-thirds of a page of foolscap. In three separate passages of this interesting piece he wrote "Napoleonic" instead of "Neo-platonic," and gave in a single sentence a most original account of

the way in which the "Napoleonic philosophers" had contributed to the decadence of that ancient "dimocracy." When the paper came back there was, of course, a blue note of exclamation against "Napoleonic" and a blue line under "dimocracy." Tom paid not the least attention—why should he?—neither to the note of exclamation nor the line, but promptly rolled the essay into a ball and shied it at the head of Wygram-Pitt. And when, in class, the master indulged in a little raillery at Tom's expense, the only effect on the pupil's mind was to make him resolve that he would console himself as soon as possible with four raspberry ices at the grub-shop. Which he accordingly did the moment the lesson was over.

The most wonderful thing about all this was that Sydenham *père*, who knew perfectly well what was going on, took it all lying down. This can only be explained by the fact that there are in Great Britain ten thousand Sydenham or other '*pères*' who also know perfectly well what is going on and also take it lying down. Once or twice the hard-headed old fellow stirred uneasily and groaned; but he soon learnt that not only himself and

his like, but the Head-master and all his satellites, into whose ears the groans were poured, were either the victims or the ministers of an impregnable tradition. He told me once that his son, if started fair in the race of life with any lad who had received a free education in a Council School, ‘wouldn’t have the ghost of a chance.’ “And the time’s coming,” he added, “when they’ll have to start fair—at least a lot fairer than they do now. When that happens, it’ll put the stopper on all this tomfoolery. Nothing else will do it. As it is, I have the business to put him into—if the business holds out; and I can tell you it’s not what it was ten years ago. I’m keeping a stool in the office for Tom when he’s through the Varsity. But, by Gad, I’ve only to put an advertisement in the paper and I’d get three hundred applications from men more competent than Tom will ever be.”

“Why don’t you put him on the Modern Side?” I asked.

“I’ve tried to, and it didn’t come off. When I spoke to the Head about it he said, ‘I wouldn’t advise that, Mr Sydenham. It’s bad policy to transfer a boy like Tom. We find it doesn’t work. Besides, I’m

anxious to retain him in the School House. He'll make an admirable Prefect in course of time.' Then I mentioned the matter to Bellasis, from Tom's old school. He strongly disapproved, said that as a Public School man himself he'd rather put a boy under a crank system than enter him on the Modern Side. He assured me that it was the refuge of the destitute, and that the best people never went there."

"But that last consideration," I said, "oughtn't to weigh with a man of your Radical views."

Sydenham *père* sighed. "That's all very well," he said, "but you forget that Tom's mother has to be considered. And she won't hear of it."

Precisely; I had forgotten that Tom's mother had to be considered.

In the Long Vacation prior to Tom's entering the University I met him in Canada travelling with a tutor. We were crossing the Rockies by the Canadian Pacific, and as I entered the Observation Car the first person I saw was Tom. His socks were bright green; his trousers were turned up; his hair was plentifully greased and plastered

down with a backward trend. No, it was not hard to classify Tom. None the less he looked pleasant, and I sat down opposite to him.

We were passing through some of the most amazing scenery in the whole world. But Tom wasn't looking at the scenery. He was reading a book. I glanced at the title. It was *The Cricketer's Who's Who*.

A woman from Omaha was sitting in the next chair, and, knowing something of the Public School Boy, I thought it advisable not to be too direct in my dealings with Tom, but to approach him gradually by way of the American woman. Addressing her, I said with my usual turn for originality—

“Those are two magnificent peaks away yonder.”

For a moment she looked at me inquiringly, and then looked at the peaks.

“Say, it looks mighty cold up there. Kind o' gives me shivers to see 'em,” she said.

I am not apt in this kind of conversation, and, not knowing what else to reply, I said—

“Yes, it must be very cold indeed.”

“They tell me you don't eat ices much in your country. Guess we eat 'em some over here.”

This was her next remark, and I saw that she was quick in the Association of Ideas.

“My young friend here eats them in both countries,” I said, thinking this would be an opening for Tom.

It was a futile overture. Tom shot out a look of annoyance, and raised *The Cricketer's Who's Who* six inches higher, thereby covering half his face.

“Oh well, he's young, and has a good set of teeth, you bet,” said the American woman. “But for people like you and me too many ices ain't good. They fetch your fillings out like pop!”

“Fetch your what out?” I cried in alarm.

“Your *fillings*. Don't you have fillings in your mouth? I've twenty-seven in mine,” and by way of a first instalment she displayed her front teeth.

Tom's face was now entirely covered by *The Cricketer's Who's Who*, and I saw that he was laughing. It was all right in that quarter. But I thought it wise to bring back the conversation to the original point.

“That is surely Mount Macdonald,” I said, indicating a peak.

“Guess it may be,” said the woman from Omaha; and she repeated, “Guess it may

be.” Then after a pause: “Wa-al, I’ve had the pleasantest vacation this year I’ve ever had. Your Canada’s a real good place. I’ve only been here six weeks and I’ve made eleven thousand dollars. You have the best bunch of Real Estate Men in this country that I’ve struck anywhere—anywhere! They treated me *well*! Say, do you know Thatcher & Scranaghan of Macleod? Well, if you’re buying Real Estate, you go to *them*! They’re smart, you bet; they do business up-to-date and don’t keep you waiting. I bought seven lots from them and sold out in three weeks for double the price. I’ll give you their card. And you tell them my name. That’s *my* card. Only don’t you let them sell you any land down Badger Creek way. You’ll see the place on this map. Sections 823 and 824 are no good at all, sir—you’ll never scalp a red cent off the price. I’ve investigated ’em. The C.P.’ll never build that new road, and J. J. Hill knows it. But Section 473’s worth looking at. Only don’t forget to mention my name. We’re lawyers in Omaha. The moment I showed my card to Mr Scranaghan he said, ‘What! Not Mrs Kitty O. Bell of Bell & Bell?’ ‘Yes,’ I says, ‘that’s me.’ ‘Shake,’

says he—and he put me on to a real snap—right away, sir. My husband spends his vacation in Oregon and I spend mine in Canada. And I guess I'll bring home more dollars than Bell does—you bet. I tell you Canada's real good for a vacation. I'm coming again next year; and Thatcher & Scranaghan won't have forgotten *me*."

I said something about the scenery of the Rockies, clumsily intimating that this was one of the reasons why Canada was good for a vacation.

The woman from Omaha looked out of the window, and by way of finally closing up that outlet for conversation she tossed her head contemptuously at the peaks and said, "Guess I wouldn't give five dollars for that lot."

As usual I was at a loss what to say next, and there was an awkward pause. Presently what I thought a rather original and apposite question suggested itself to my mind; or, rather, my evil genius suggested it.

"What becomes of the children," I inquired, "while you and Mr Bell are on your holidays?"

Mrs Kitty O. Bell started at these words, and her mobile face passed through a variety



of contortions which would have done credit to a pantomime clown. Finally she opened her mouth in a burst of laughter which showed her twenty-seven “fillings” all complete. Laughing, or rather shrieking, between the words, she ejaculated—

“Well—that’s real pop—*children?* My! —I wouldn’t have believed that any sensible person would ask a question like *that!* Why—(a pause)—you must be younger than you look! Children! Guess Bell & Bell ain’t in that line of business. No, sir!”

Shortly after, not getting the kind of change out of me she wanted, she got up and went to the other end of the car.

By this time Tom had laid *The Cricketer’s Who’s Who* on his knee, and there was an expression on his face which seemed to say that the Public Schools of Great Britain had been sufficiently amused and were now prepared to make a remark. I thought the Psychological Moment was come.

“Like Canada, Tom?” I asked.

“Oh, not half bad”; and then, as though this were too committing, he added, “On the whole, don’t you know.”

“Well, what parts have you seen?”

Another bad shot. The Public Schools

don't like being asked for details. Tom picked up *The Cricketer's Who's Who* and said, with averted eyes and in the muffled voice proper for addressing those who seek information, "Oh, Quebec and Winnipeg, and all that sort of thing."

"What did you think of Winnipeg?"

"Oh, a jolly rotten place. When we were there it was full of Johnnies from the Medical Association or something of that. There was a beastly squash in the Hotel."

I resolved to try something else, and the next attempt was more successful.

"Tom," I said, "I wonder if that book you're reading says anything about Alfred Shaw?"

"Rather!" cried Tom, with surprising vigour. "His average for wickets in 1874 was the highest on record. He fell off a lot in 1875, but picked up again next year. In my opinion his best form was in 1879<sup>1</sup>—that was the year he took nine wickets against Yorkshire. By Jove, I'd like to have seen that!"

"I *knew* Alfred Shaw, Tom."

"Did you though? By Jove! What was he like?"

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately I have not been able to verify these references.

“Well, when he wasn’t playing cricket, he kept a public-house——”

“In a village called Burton Joyce,” cried Tom. “I know—in Nottinghamshire.”

“Yes; I’ve had many a glass of beer poured out by Alfred Shaw.”

“By Jove!” cried Tom.

“And I’ll tell you another thing. I once hit him to the boundary.”

“To the boundary! I say! When was that? In first-class cricket? What was the ball like? Did it break to the off?”

I was getting along splendidly. But, unfortunately, I was growing excited, and my next remark carried me too far and spoilt everything.

“Tom,” I said, speaking in a tone I must have picked up in Canada, “are you aware that you’re talking to a man who once stood up to Spofforth?”

I was going to add modestly, “though not for long”—but it was too late. Had I not begun to boast, and so been guilty of “side,” thereby committing the unforgivable sin against the holy ghost of the Public School? Tom’s quick instinct detected the offence in an instant, and he again picked up *The Cricketer’s Who’s Who*.

There was a long pause. I was humiliated and in despair. One more attempt, and, if that failed, I would give it up. So at length I broke the silence with this question—

“Seen anything of Joe?”

At last I had hit the mark. Tom shut up *The Cricketer's Who's Who* with a snap, leaned forward, and looked at me with a man's expression on his face.

“You've heard about the row,” he said. “The mater's furious, and won't write to Joe or read his letters. And the poor old pater's half frantic. The mater made me promise I wouldn't go near them. But the pater said I might if I got a chance. Between you and me I believe that's why he sent me to Canada. And what's more, I mean to see them, if I can get round old Selby,” and Tom turned an eye in the direction of his tutor.

“I've just been staying with them.”

“No! And you saw Mary! Isn't she ripping?”

I said she was, and I told my story in detail, Tom drinking in every word.

“I wish you'd talk to old Selby,” he said, when I had done. “You could work it all right. I *must* see Mary—and Joe. It's a beastly rotten shame that they won't let me.”

"You shall see them," I said. And, to cut a long story short, he did.

Having never been admitted into the secret myself, I cannot tell you how Tom managed to go through his University course and get his degree. If you want the mystery cleared up you must go to the examiners who passed him and ask them. They will not tell you, but if you carefully attend to what they do not say, you can make up the explanation for yourself. The only explanation I can give is of the kind which I had to offer when the question arose why old Sydenham submitted to a system which he knew to be wrong—namely, that there are thousands of young men as ignorant as Tom who have blossomed out into B.A.'s.

Two incidents only from the history of this momentous period am I able to record—the first, theological; the second, literary.

Tom had to pass an examination in "Divinity," a due equipment in which was deemed indispensable to Mastership of Arts and to general competence to face the storms and responsibilities of life. One of the questions was: "Explain what is meant by 'undergirding the ship.'" When Tom saw

that question on the paper he felt he was going to score, for he had received a "tip" three days before, and had prepared himself by consulting a work on Ancient Navigation, profusely illustrated. Though Tom was not exactly a first-class Theologian or Classical Scholar, he had a native gift for draughtsmanship, and it cost him little trouble to draw an excellent picture of an ancient vessel, anchored by the stern in a stormy sea, with a lee-shore in the background and a lowering sky overhead. The crew were displayed in the very act of undergirding the ship; they had cast slip nooses round the hull, *fore and aft* (Tom was particular about that), and, standing in two well-balanced groups, were hauling on the ropes which drew the noose tight. St. Paul was seen in a dignified attitude, apparently criticising the operation as superfluous.

When the examiner, who was a yachting man—the basis of the tip just referred to—saw this picture on the first page of the paper, he had to confess to himself that Tom knew more about the undergirding of ships than he did himself, and actually studied the drawing for half an hour, making several notes in a small pocket-book. He was distinctly prejudiced in favour of Tom,

and though this favourable bias was somewhat weakened by the subsequent answers, it remained in force to the end, and Tom passed the examination. Tom was pleased at the result, which confirmed his belief that in Divinity, as in other subjects, “anything would do.”

The other incident has reference to Tom’s final examination for his pass degree. He had to present “Three Plays of Shakespeare,” the preparation of which he had, of course, left to the last moment. On the very day before the examination he sent me a scrawling note to the effect ‘that he was awfully hung-up on those plays. Would I coach him up a bit and give him a few tips?’ So about five o’clock in the afternoon I went round to his rooms. As I passed under his window—it was on the third floor—I noticed that the ground was littered with balls of crumpled paper, and presently one hit me on the shoulder. Something tempted me to pick it up. It was a page from a School Edition, with notes, of *Richard III*. I could not refrain from reading it through, for it began with these lines—

“Let’s whip these stragglers o’er the seas again ;  
Lash hence these overweening rags of France,

These famished beggars weary of their lives ;  
 Who but for dreaming on this fond exploit,  
 For want of means, poor rats, had hanged themselves :  
 If we be conquered, let men conquer us . . .  
 Fight, gentlemen of England ! fight, bold yeomen !  
 Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head !  
 Spur your proud horses hard and ride in blood. . . .”

The page ended—

*K. Rich.* “Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,  
 And I will stand the hazard of the die :  
 I think there be six Richmonds in the field ;  
 Five have I slain to-day instead of him.  
 A horse ! A horse ! My kingdom for a horse.”

From silly boyhood onwards, this splendid rhodomontade has made my blood boil, and I believe that I unconsciously began to mouth the lines as I stood outside the door, for, on looking round, I saw undergraduates laughing at the windows. I was about to enter when a second ball of paper fell at my feet. This also I picked up : it was the last page of the play. A moment later the cover of a book whizzed through the air, and I heard Tom’s voice from the third floor. “Good-bye, Mr Richard,” it said ; “it’ll be a long time before I see *you* again.”

“Tom,” I said, on entering the room, “this is not the right way to prepare for an examination in English Literature.”



"Jolly good way when you're short of time," he answered; "burns your ships, don't you know, and all that sort of thing. Chuck 'em away, and then you can't worry about 'em any more. Let's go on to the next; there are two more, beastly long ones, *Coriolanus* and *Lear*, and I've not read a line of *Coriolanus*. We did *Lear* at school, and I'll have to chance that. But I'll have a shot at *Coriolanus* while you're here."

"Tom," I said, "it's not *Coriolanus*. It's *Julius Cæsar*."

"By Jove!" cried Tom, consulting the syllabus, "you're right. It was *Coriolanus* I was ploughed in last time. Lucky for me you came round!"

So Tom took his degree, and the time came for him to "go into the business." But, alas! there was little business for him to go into. The great firm of sugar refiners, which had borne the family name for four generations, was drifting on the rocks. A greater than Sydenham & Co. had appeared on the high seas of commerce, and by skilful manœuvring had forced the old ship among the breakers, already strewn with other wreckage. In three years from the day on

which Tom was capped and gowned Sydenham & Co. were bankrupt, and the very stool which had been reserved for his occupation was sold for the benefit of creditors.

How Tom spent the said three years is one of those historical problems which are doomed to remain unsolved to the end of time. For some months he was supposed to be "in the office," though of what he did there I have but the faintest idea. Probably he spent most of his time in creating additional work for the other clerks; at least one of them was heard to remark that the only part of Tom's body they were glad to see "in the office" was his back. But this didn't last for long. Soon it became apparent that shortly there would be no office for Tom to be "in," and other careers had to be thought of. One day he informed me that he was going into the Diplomatic Service. From the tone in which he said this you might have supposed that Tom had just wired to the Diplomatic Service to say that he was coming, and had received a reply that the Diplomatic Service was counting the minutes till his arrival. This led to his being sent to Germany "to acquire the language." Coming back, he assured me that he had had

a "ripping time"; and in reply to my question, 'How much of the language had he acquired?' he said, "Jolly little. Hadn't any time. I say, you know Ollendorf, don't you? Well, we did Ollendorf; and there's only one sentence out of the whole show that I can remember: 'Wo ist der Schuhmachers Hund?' (*sic*) Travelled all over Germany with that sentence. Listen while I say it again. Take a lot to beat an accent like that!"

'Wo ist der Schuhmachers Hund' not being considered adequate to the purposes of diplomacy, the next news was that Tom was going to "take" an administrative post in Nigeria. The authorities in Nigeria not rising to the occasion, Tom bought a book of eight hundred pages called "Careers for English Gentlemen." During the next few months there was hardly a career in that book for which Tom was not "going in." But for some unexplained reason he went in for none of them; or if he did "go in" he was very promptly shown the door.

Meantime Tom dressed in exquisite taste; called a hansom to drive him to the next street; and invariably travelled first class. It was this latter circumstance that pre-

cipitated the crisis. One day his father's largest creditor, who was unknown to Tom, sat opposite to him in a first-class carriage. He looked the young man up and down, examined his clothes, his ring, his diamond and opal pin, drew him into conversation—and formed a resolution. On reaching his destination the man drove straight to the office of the next largest creditor. “It's high time we put the screw on Sydenham,” he said. “There's not much left, but we'd better get what there is before that young ass spends it all.”

Three years had now passed since Tom took his B.A. He had kept his name on the College books; and two days before the father was made a bankrupt the son was made a Master of Arts. The fees for this amounted to twenty pounds. The cheque which the old man gave Tom for the purpose was wet with tears, for at that moment he had not a sixpence he could rightfully call his own; and he was hysterical and broken-hearted. It was the last cheque he ever wrote: a month later he was dead.

So Tom had to look for a “job.” His mother suggested Holy Orders, but Tom, like a true Briton, swore that he would die

first. "Teaching" naturally came next; for was he not a Master of Arts, and had he not rowed in his College boat? But again our hero stiffened his back and said, "Not till I'm at the last gasp." He knew that of teaching as of learning he had no ghost of an idea; he knew also that this would be small impediment to his getting a post; but Tom had his good points. However, a job of some sort he must have, and now the fact dawned upon him for the first time that there was no job of one kind or another that he was capable of undertaking. He went to the Secretary of the University Employment Bureau and said he wanted a job. "What kind of a job?" asked the Secretary. "Oh, anything," said Tom. The Secretary mentally ejaculated "nothing," and with a vague promise to "do his best" the interview came to an end. The Secretary had a dozen such applications every week.

After some months passed in the futile and soul-racking process of "looking round," Tom fell into despair and even into fits of panic. He talked of enlisting, and once I met him prowling about the neighbourhood of St. George's Barracks. I guessed what he was after and led him home. His mother

told me that the same night she heard him shrieking in his bedroom. Entering the room, she found him sitting upright in bed ; and on her asking " What was the matter ? " he roared out, " A job, a job ! My kingdom for a job ! " It was the first time he was known to attempt a quotation from the literature of his native land.

" Why not try Canada ? " was, of course, on all our lips. But Mrs Sydenham, who had never forgiven Joe for his marriage, strenuously resisted. None the less Tom himself was on our side. " I believe Joe would find me a job on his farm," he said. " In fact he offered me one some years ago. Or I might pick something up in one of the cities. Winnipeg, for example. What do you think ? "

I thought it worth trying ; so did we all, except the implacable mother. It was plain, however, that her resistance must be overcome ; if not by persuasion then by a *coup d'état*. So among us we subscribed forty pounds, and Tom, in flat opposition to his mother's wishes, was packed off to Winnipeg. He had several introductions ; among them was one I gave him to a certain Professor of Mathematics, named Murdoch.

And there was Joe to fall back on if all else failed. Those of us who knew Joe were at ease as to the upshot.

Arrived in that city, Tom commenced anew the process of looking round, this time without despair or panic. He nearly succeeded in getting a job behind the counter in a drapery store, but was finally rejected on account of his slowness in adding dollars and cents. Then he tried for a berth in the office of an Advertising Agency, and was again rejected because of his honest face, and also on the ground of his being “altogether too damned English.”

Hearing that the Banks were exceptionally busy, he got an introduction to the Manager of a small local branch. When Tom entered the Manager was engaged in conversation with a clerk, and for some minutes he seemed to take no notice of the newcomer, though he occasionally glanced at him out of the corner of his eye. The clerk was dismissed, and then, with a suddenness that disconcerted Tom, the Manager swooped down on him and began to speak. The following is a faithful report of the interview :—

*Manager.*—“ Can you write shorthand and use a typewriter ? ”

*Tom.*—"No, I'm afraid I can't."

*Manager.*—"Afraid you can't! You mean you *can't*, I suppose?"

*Tom.*—"Yes."

*Manager.*—"Then why didn't you say so? Well—what did you learn at school?"

*Tom.*—"Oh, Latin and Greek and——"

*Manager.*—"Don't use 'em in this Bank. What else?"

*Tom.*—"Oh, Arithmetic and all that sort of thing."

*Manager.*—"We don't want 'that sort of thing' in this Bank. We only want Arithmetic. Here" (handing him a slip of paper), "write your name." (Tom wrote his name.)

*Manager.*—"Bad. Now write 'Winnipeg.'" (Tom wrote 'Winnepeg'.)

The Manager said nothing, but walked across the room to the neighbourhood of a spittoon. Then he sat down and began to arrange some papers. Tom waited several minutes. Presently, without raising his eyes from his work, the Manager said, "Say, you—what are you waiting for?"

"I don't exactly know," answered Tom.

"Neither do I," said the Manager; "go home and get some schooling."

Next he "put in" for the post of waiter



in the dining-car of the trans-continental trains, and was actually accepted; but he had the misfortune to sprain his ankle the very first time he tried to carry a load of dishes from the galley. Nursed to recovery by the good Murdoch, he put an advertisement in the paper for the post of Hotel clerk. He got four answers; but on presenting himself at the Hotels he was rejected at sight by every one of them, without reason given. These events greatly discouraged him, and once or twice he alarmed the Murdochs by renewing his nocturnal cries.

One day he said to Murdoch, "I've got a new idea. When I was at school I was fag to the present Earl of Birmingham and he used to make me cut his hair. Birmingham was awfully particular about his hair, and used to lick me like blazes if I didn't do it right. So I became a swagger hair-cutter, and I used to cut some of the other chaps' for half a sovereign apiece. Old Birmingham once gave me a pound for doing his. Why not try for a job as hair-cutter in one of the big hotels?"

"But can you *shave*?" said Murdoch, "for you'll have to do that as well. And shaving in this country is a high Art."

“That rather sticks me,” said Tom. “Birmingham used to make me shave him twice a week, and always gave me two bob for doing it, but I could never find anything on his face to shave. However, I never cut him with the razor. He would have skinned me if I had.”

“Look here,” said Murdoch, “sit down and cut my hair this very minute and I’ll see if you shape. And, by thunder, you shall shave me too! But no—that’s no use; we haven’t got the apparatus. However, here are the scissors and a comb. Now fire away.”

Tom “fired away,” and, as the operation proceeded, Murdoch, who saw that he was shaping right, began to reflect.

“Tom,” said Murdoch, “you’ve got a fine sense of proportion.”

“Didn’t know it,” said Tom.

“It’s the basis of hair-cutting—and of many other things. And it’s not common. By the way, did you ever study the surface of a solid? My head’s a solid, you know. At least I believe it’s not empty.”

“That’s Mathematics and that sort of thing, isn’t it?” said Tom.

“Yes. You learnt Mathematics at school, didn’t you?”

“They *taught* ’em to me, at least they pretended to. But I never *learnt* ’em. I don’t think I picked up one single bally idea about the whole business. I got some by heart when I had to pass ‘smalls.’ But I did none of ’em right.”

“I never had a better cut,” said Murdoch, contemplating himself in the glass. “Tom, you’re a genius. We’ll go down to the Alexandra Hotel to-morrow morning, and I’ll introduce you to the man who runs the barber’s shop and I’ll give you a testimonial. You’ll make good for sure. But go canny on the shaving, my boy, or you’ll get fired.”

“I’ll pull the shaving off, you bet,” said Tom.

“All right. And now we’ll do some Mathematics.”

“I bar that,” said Tom, and he slew a mosquito which had just settled on the back of his hand.

Murdoch picked up a gramophone disc, and, suspending it by its axis between his two forefingers, set it in rapid revolution.

“What’s that?” said Murdoch.

“By Jove, it’s a sphere!”

“Now suppose this disc were square

instead of round, and we were to spin it—so. What should we get?”

“I don’t know what you call the blessed thing, but I know what it would look like.”

“Draw it.”

Tom sat down, and in half a minute he had drawn a cylinder, solid as reality itself.

“That’s Solid Geometry,” said Murdoch. “I’ll teach you the rest of it in a month. Now let’s do the 47th Proposition of the First Book of Euclid.”

“Oh, stow it,” said Tom, “and let’s talk about the hair-cutting.”

“That’s precisely what we are talking about. Here, take that diagram and prove that the two little squares are equal to the one big one.”

Tom laughed, and killed another mosquito. “It’s like old times,” he said. “I remember old Selby pounding away at those squares. But he never pounded ’em into *me*. I used to think what a rummy thing it was that they should be equal, but I got no further. I wondered why they didn’t fill the squares with water, or something of that, and then measure it. But then the rotten things have got no bottoms to ’em.”

“That’s a way space has,” replied Mur-

doch. “But you’re all right for the start. Geometry began when people first saw that things were ‘rummy.’ Now attend to this.”

Before Tom had realised that the thing was other than a joke he had mastered the 47th Proposition of Euclid. Something seemed to explode at the back of his forehead, a veil was rent in twain, and a great light shone round about him. Tom saw the darkness break and scatter; he heard the jostle of retreating illusions; a voice called and echoes answered; there was a tumult of in-pressing thoughts; then a deep silence; and then the calling voice and the answering echoes awoke once more.

“It’s like a flower,” he cried, “and I can see right through it, flower and stem and roots and all. By Jove, Murdoch, but this is a jolly interesting thing!<sup>1</sup> Go on, there’s a good chap.”

“All in good time, my boy; and good

<sup>1</sup> “He [Hobbes] was forty years old before he looked on Geometry, which happened accidentally; being in a gentleman’s library in —, Euclid’s *Elements* lay open, and it was the 47th Prop. Lib. I. So he reads the proposition. ‘By G——,’ says he, ‘this is impossible!’ So he reads the demonstration, which referred him back to another, which he also read, *et sic deinceps*, that at last he was demonstratively convinced of its truth. This made him in love with Geometry.”—Aubrey, quoted by Professor G. Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, p. 31.

time means quick time in this country. You go and earn some money, and then we'll begin your education. In twelve months you're going to be the best mathematician in Manitoba. Listen; you'll earn one hundred dollars before the season's out. You'll enter our engineering college in October twelvemonth. Next spring you'll work out again and earn five hundred dollars by the Fall—and so on for three years, paying your own way all the time. At the end you'll be a fully qualified engineer, and you'll get a job right away on the C.P.R. for two thousand dollars a year."

"It's a bully plan," cried Tom, and a flush of happiness swept over the miseries of the last two years.

"But we've forgotten the hair-cutting. What if I don't get the job? And what if I get fired?"

"You'll get the job, and you won't get fired. Put your hat on and we'll settle the thing right away."

It was the busy time of the year at the Alexandra Hotel. None the less the man who ran the barber's shop made some demur, which Professor Murdoch met by displaying

his head and inviting an investigation. The man was so far satisfied; but then the dreaded word "shaving" was mentioned. Now came the tug of war. Tom made professions which were greeted by shakes of the head. Suddenly the man flung himself down into a chair and said, "Shave me right away."

Now Tom was not without his notions. He had been shaved by Winnipeg barbers many a time, and knew the ritual. Moreover, he had a splendid nerve. So, taking a look round the room by way of refreshing his memory and facing the grins of his fellow-barbers like a man, he set to work without a tremor, and though the roots of the manager's beard had reached a state of development forty years ahead of anything Tom had ever found on the cheeks of the Earl of Birmingham, he almost succeeded in finishing the job "on time"—for the manager had his watch before him and was counting the seconds. "You'll shape," he said; "be here at six o'clock to-morrow morning."

A week later Tom Sydenham, Master of Arts, now aged twenty-five, received the sum of ten dollars, which was the first honest money he had ever earned in his life. His second education had begun.

All winter Tom worked at his calling, and actually liked it. He proved himself uncommonly proficient, and his wages were considerably raised. He lived meanwhile with the Murdochs. And here a fact must be recorded which the British mind is slow to comprehend, or even to believe. Although Tom was what we should call a "hair-dresser's assistant," he was not on that account considered a person unfit for "good society." The Murdochs were not ashamed of him; on the contrary, they freely introduced him to their friends, and made no secret of his calling. He was a pleasant fellow, I must admit, and rather good-looking. Moreover, the word went round that he was going "to make good," and I rather think it was this that carried the day. Nobody cared *what* "good" he was going to make or *how* he was going to make it; but about the main fact that "good" was in the making there seemed to be no doubt.

How did they find that out? I cannot tell you. If you disbelieve my statements, go to Winnipeg and make your investigations on the spot. You will soon learn that the inhabitants of those regions are gifted with a kind of instinct, perhaps a survival from



arboreal ancestors, which enables them to divide with infallible certainty the men who are going to make good from those who are not—these the sheep and those the goats. If they place you among the sheep you will have all needed credentials for "moving in good society" and no mean inquiries will be made about you. You may even be, as Tom was, a "mere hairdresser's assistant," but provided—and the condition is absolute—there is an air of "making good" about you, the Mayor of the City may invite you to dinner as he invited Tom, and will not make himself obtrusively unpleasant if he sees you paying particular attention to one of his daughters—as Tom did. It is true that next morning you may have to shave the Mayor in the barber's shop of the Royal Alexandra Hotel; and this, if you are an imported Englishman, will make you a trifle uncomfortable. But the Mayor won't mind in the least; and neither will you, after a moment's reflection. You will remember that the Mayor of Winnipeg is not the Earl of Birmingham, nor in the least like him. You are shaving him, and no doubt shaving is a "menial office." But such are the ups and downs of fortune to which men are

exposed in that advancing province of the British Empire that possibly in ten years' time—nay, in two years' time—the situation will be reversed: instead of you shaving the Mayor, the Mayor may be shaving *you*, while your motor—I mean your automobile—is waiting at the door. All this the Mayor knows perfectly well; and this is what relieves him of embarrassment as he observes, from the corner of his eye, that the man who is putting the lather on his chin is the same man who yesterday was paying particular attention to his daughter. Have no embarrassment, therefore, on your side. Only—I must repeat this—everything depends on your having satisfied the Mayor—and his daughter—that you are going to “make good.”

A still more incredible thing has to be recorded. As some men are said to “get religion” by a sudden act of conversion, so Tom Sydenham had “got” Mathematics. Every hour of his leisure time, though these hours were not many, he spent in working problems with Murdoch. Tom pinned a fresh problem every night to his looking-glass, and next morning while he buttoned his collar with the assistance of

one eye he used the other for studying his problem. As Tom stood at his task in the barber's shop there was ever a spirit at his elbow whispering Mathematics into his greedy ear. He triangulated the heads from which he was cutting the hair; every head was an unexplored province, and Tom was a surveyor ordering the clearing of forests, laying down the sites of new cities, and marking out the roads. His shaving was no less scientific. He laid the lather on in parabolic curves, starting from the chin; he treated the nose as the focus of an ellipse; the sweeps of his razor were planes cutting a cone, and the angles of the jaw hurried him on to Spherical Trigonometry. Tom shaved uncommonly well, and his rapidity was marvellous.

When spring came he was qualified for passing an examination far more difficult than that which he had to face. But money for his college course was still lacking; for, though his wages were good, he had not been able to save more than fifty dollars. Something more lucrative than barbering must be found if he was to face the coming session with an easy mind.

"I've got it, Murdoch!" he said one day.

“I’ve just had a letter from Joe. Joe is going strong in sheep. Three years ago he imported one of the Perryman rams for £400, and now he writes that he’s got the finest flock in Alberta. He says the sheep-shearing season’s coming on, and he’s badly in want of hands. A good man can earn one hundred dollars a month. Now it strikes me, Murdoch, there’s some connection between the hair of humans and the wool of sheep; not much, but enough to give one an idea, don’t you know. A man who can cut the one ought to be able to clip the other.”

“*A priori*,” said Murdoch, “your conclusion’s not quite self-evident. But you’re a clever chap, especially when you get a pair of scissors in your hand, and *a priori* arguments don’t apply to clever chaps. I suppose you know that sheep-shearing’s an exhausting occupation, and a filthy one to boot? Have you the physique?”

“I’ll get it,” said Tom. “The Sydenhams aren’t made of putty.”

Tom’s success as a sheep-shearer has been the greatest triumph of his life up to date. His training was brief. He watched a skilled hand shear two sheep, and then, to

quote his own words in a letter to me, "struck in right away," and found in a week that he could "clip like greased lightning." "My back was nearly broken the first day," he said, "but Mary rubbed it with some stuff she has, and made me laugh so much that I got fit in no time. She's a brick, I tell you."

Tom stayed with Joe till the shearing was over; and the season being still early, he then made his way across the border to one of the great sheep ranches of Montana. Here he organised a gang of Mexicans, and contracted with the owner of the ranch for the shearing of ten thousand sheep. On the last day of shearing a competition was held between Tom and two picked men of his gang on the one side, and three champions from a famous gang on the other. Tom's side won by five sheep, and at the end of the match he and his two supporters had to be carried from the field in a fainting condition on the backs of three strapping cow-boys. I will not tell the reader how many sheep Tom sheared that day with his own hands. I will not tell for this reason: once I mentioned the number to an old shepherd of my acquaintance in England; whereupon

he promptly called me a liar and turned on his heel. The facts are recorded in the Agricultural Archives of the State of Montana: let the reader consult them there. For the same reason I forbear to say how much money Tom earned that season. Enough that he came back to Manitoba with a large space in his "grip" full of dollar bills. His first year's expenses at college and something more were promptly placed in the bank, a cheque for £30 was sent to me in repayment of a loan, and a splendid fur coat packed off to his widowed sister as a birthday gift. Tom hadn't forgotten the people at home.

At the end of his first year Tom came out third among eighty students. At the end of the second he was first among sixty-five.

About this time a high official of the Grand Trunk Pacific came round to the college.

"We want six first-class men," he said to the Professor. "What can you do for us?"

"Unfortunately our best man has only completed his second year. His name's Sydenham, and he's a bit of a genius," said the Professor.

The official wrote the name in a pocket-book. "Let me have a look at him," he said.

"He's sheep-shearing in Montana at the present moment, making money for his last year," said the Professor.

"Sounds good," answered the official. "When he's through don't forget to send him to me."

## VII. A PSYCHOLOGIST AMONG THE SAINTS <sup>1</sup>

“Enfin, pour tout dire, nous ne voyons pas les choses mêmes ; nous nous bornons le plus souvent, à lire des étiquettes collées sur elles. . . . Et ce ne sont pas seulement les objets extérieurs, ce sont aussi nos propres états d'âme qui se dérobent à nous dans ce qu'ils ont d'intime, de personnel, d'originalement vécu.”—HENRI BERGSON, *Le Rire*, pp. 156-7.

THE day's work was done, the family had retired to rest, and the house was still. George Marsh sealed up the last of many letters, drew the curtains closer, and pushed an arm-chair in front of the fire. One quiet hour—the most precious of the day or night—and he too would retire. Should he read or think? He resolved to think.

Not wisely, perhaps ; for his mind was troubled, and he began to brood upon a thought. The thought was one which had been nascent within him for months ; he

<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Hibbert Journal*, October 1911.



had felt it stirring within him all day long, and as he sat and brooded it was born. "I shall die as I have lived," he said aloud—"an unconverted man. I shall never be converted." And a profound melancholy overpowered him.

George Marsh was fifty-five years of age. By outward seeming he was a successful and very fortunate man. In the matter of health and wealth, of wife and child, he had won and kept what few men win ever and what fewer keep for long. None the less he seemed to himself, as he spread his hands over the dying fire, an utter failure and most unfortunate.

"It has all come to nothing," he said; "it will never come to anything." The clock struck twelve, and George Marsh heard "never" repeated twelve times. "That settles it," he went on, addressing the fire. "I *cannot* be converted now. I know too much."

That day he had finished his course of lectures on "The Psychology of Religion," of which subject he was a professional teacher. The lectures had attracted a great audience, and been a brilliant success. He had been told by

a friend that they constituted an "epoch-making event"; not that Marsh himself attached much value to the epithet, for he had heard it too often about books and things which had been forgotten in a fortnight; but it was pleasant to hear, all the same.

In the last lecture he had dealt with "The Phenomena of Conversion: their Inner Nature and the Laws of their Occurrence." He had laid down the famous "Three Laws of Conversion," "which," said an admirer, "are destined to revolutionise our conceptions of the spiritual realm as completely as Newton's Three Laws of Motion have revolutionised our conceptions of the physical universe." George Marsh ought to have been a proud man.

His brooding continued. "I have made my own conversion impossible," he thought, "by learning to understand conversion. Nay, I have done more—and worse. I have let my audience into the secret, and as I cannot be converted, so neither can they. Once my book is published, conversion will become impossible to its readers for the reasons that make it

impossible for me. It must never be published."

Hereupon a sudden impulse seized him. He rose from the fireside and snatched the manuscript of his lectures from the table. He hesitated for the moment, for the best of his life-work lay in those pages.

The door opened, and his wife entered the room.

"What has happened to you?" she said. "It is past two o'clock. Are you going to sit up all night? And what are you doing with those manuscripts?"

"I'm going to throw them into the fire," said Marsh.

"Nonsense!" She snatched them out of his hand and promptly locked them up in a drawer. Mrs Marsh was not unprepared. For many days she had heard her husband's mutterings, and had divined the thought which was working, like a maggot, in his brain. "Now go to bed," said she, "and don't be a fool."

Marsh obeyed; and thus the work "which has produced a revolution in the spiritual realm" was saved for posterity.

George Marsh had spent his life, as all

men do, in the pursuit of the Infinite; and the long and short of it is that the quest had failed. Had he pursued the Infinite under the stimulation of alcohol, or the lulling dreams of opium; had he tried the love of women, the heaping up of riches, or the "will-to-power"; had he sought the goal in the secret of perpetual motion or the squaring of the circle—his failure would have been no more complete. George Marsh had had recourse to none of these things; he had pursued the Infinite along paths which sages had trodden before him; but the Infinite was still uncaptured. This thought added to the bitterness of his defeat.

"I don't believe there *is* any Infinite," he said, "for if there were I should have found it ere now." This was not the language he used in his lectures; but it was language that came into his thoughts as he sat in the silent house on the night when this history begins.

Now the seekers of the Infinite may be divided into two classes. The first class is represented by any person who may happen to have spent a long morning searching for his lost spectacles and then

found them on his nose ; the second class by the Irishman who had to find the spectacles before he could look for them. The Infinite and the spectacles have this in common, that you may lose them as readily by putting them in the right place as by putting them in the wrong. Lost in either way both Infinite and spectacles are equally difficult to find. To which class of losers George Marsh belonged, I do not know ; but he certainly belonged to one of them, for there is no third.

## I

He had been brought up in the strictest traditions of Evangelical piety. But the reader must not infer from this that the parents of George Marsh were ignorant and narrow-minded people. They were eminent in every quality that is lovable : in the words of a distinguished American author who spent a month as the family guest, 'they were the most lovely people he had ever met.' And the same words may be applied to the aged clergyman, a noted Simeonite, who taught the family

faith with learning and eloquence, and sustained it by the example of his character and daily life. I remember that circle well, and it stands out in memory like a place of palms and running waters amid the deserts of life. It may be that the prejudice of the years is creeping over me; for among the faces I see around there are none which speak to me of more honourable things. The type, they say, is disappearing; so much the worse for the world.

The evangelical teaching of those days reposed on a mechanical diagram, precise as if its reference were not to the fate of immortal souls, but to the working of an eight-day clock. This was a source both of strength and of weakness. Of strength, because method, unity, coherence, with all their attendant mnemonic advantages lay in the diagram; of weakness, because the neophyte was left to his own devices at the most dangerous point in his conversion, the point, namely, where the mechanism had to be transformed into a living thing. Hence it was that many stopped short at the mechanical outline, and play-acting had to do the rest. George Marsh

## A PSYCHOLOGIST AMONG THE SAINTS

was one of these. Whether the fault was his own, or whether it lay in the system, I cannot decide. But here are the facts.

When George was seventeen those about him became anxious for his conversion, and measures were taken to bring that event to pass. The chief agent in these proceedings was the Simeonite clergyman. He set the appointed mechanism in motion, explained its working, and told the boy what to do and what to expect. All that was required of him in the way of prayer, repentance, faith, and works George was made to understand; and the good Simeonite rested not from his labours until he was satisfied that the pupil had the lesson well by heart.

Nor was there the least recalcitrancy in George. Anxious as others were for his conversion, he was ten times as anxious himself. Before all things else he desired to be converted. Eagerly he drank in the words of his instructor, and, being a boy of good memory, he repeated the lesson to himself in his leisure moments and made sure that he had got it right.

His knowledge of the way of salvation was perfect; but he could not persuade

himself, though he often tried to do so, that he himself was saved. This troubled him greatly. Not that his father or mother worried him about the matter, though he was conscious of their solicitude. They were content to wait upon God's good pleasure and were confident of the result.

The trouble began over the question of Repentance. George was willing, nay eager, to repent of anything, if only he could think of something worth repenting of. But he couldn't. A thousand times he told himself that he was a miserable sinner, but he didn't feel like one, and couldn't for the life of him understand what wrong he had done. It is true he had fired a pea-shooter at the cat; he had once killed a blackbird; he had kicked a little boy for making faces at him; he had been rude to his aunt; but he had far too much good sense to treat these actions as the needed raw material for a genuine repentance. Once in his father's study he had seen a cash-box lying open on the table and had seriously debated the question of stealing a sovereign, in order to get a point of departure. But



again his good sense came to the rescue. God was not likely to be deceived by so shallow a trick.

He took the difficulty to his spiritual adviser, from whom he learnt that he had been on the "wrong tack" in hunting for particular sins; that this was the false Romish method of dealing with human nature; that the root of the evil lay further back. Then the clergyman reminded him of his fallen condition. This George never doubted for an instant; he admitted it was a most lamentable state of affairs; but somehow the admission made no difference. After a good night's rest he woke up feeling just as jolly as if the Fall were unhistorical. Then it occurred to him that feeling jolly was the very sin of which he had to repent, for what fallen creature has a right to feel anything but miserable? So he fell on his knees, convinced that repentance had at last begun. "O Lord," he said, "I am very miserable because I felt so jolly just now. I repent of my fallen state." A moment later—for he was an honest boy—he cried, "O Lord, it's a lie. I'm only pretending. I'm not miserable

at all." But he *was* miserable all the same.

As the days wore on his misery increased until it became intolerable. But one night a thought flashed through George's brain and gave him instant relief. "This misery," he suddenly reflected, "*is* my repentance. Why, I have been repenting all along without knowing it! Hurrah!" His devotions ended, he went to his collar-drawer and took out a card hidden under the white paper which covered the bottom of the drawer. On this card he had written down the scheme of salvation under numbered heads. He now put a tick against Repentance, to indicate that the event had taken place. It was one of the happiest moments in his life.

But a new difficulty arose in regard to Faith. Here again he followed his instructions to the letter. The Simeonite told him what he must believe; and it fell under three heads. George was confident he would have no difficulty in believing them all, both in severalty and in combination. He fell asleep saying to himself for the hundredth time that he believed; and he went on saying it in his

dreams. Next day he remembered his professions overnight, and looked in his heart for signs of the new birth that was to follow. But he couldn't find them. Again there seemed to be no difference. "Perhaps," he reflected, "the trouble comes from my not believing *enough*. I'll have another try to-night. I must *realise* these things." So he hit upon a plan. He wrote out the required acts of faith on three separate cards, and when night came he placed them in turn under the light of the gas, staring fixedly at each for many minutes and trying to *realise* what it meant. This went on for weeks. But it was no good. The only tangible result was that George had to take sleeping-draughts, to pay a visit to the oculist, and to wear blue spectacles for three months. But there was no new birth; at least there was nothing that he could identify under that description.

Of all the accessory exercises he neglected none. He prayed, and read his Bible, making strenuous efforts to "take in" what it meant, and staring at the great and blessed words, just as he stared at his card, until the letters swam together and

his head ached. All in vain. Do what he would, he couldn't get himself converted.

Then it occurred to him that perhaps he had been converted all the time without knowing it. The episode of his repentance might be repeated in his conversion as a whole. This gave him a passing comfort, and sent him to the Simeonite with the question on his lips; "What does it *feel like* when you are saved?" The Simeonite; in all kindness and sincerity, told him what it "felt like." George groaned in spirit and said, "I don't feel like that—not one little bit." He was not converted, after all.

Nevertheless the interview was not without its fruits. Following his former practice, George, on returning home, wrote down on a card a list of the "feelings" that would arise within him at the hour of his new birth. He wrote them down in the very words of the Simeonite. "At all events," he reflected, "I now know what I am to expect. As soon as any of these feelings begin I shall know that I'm coming all right."

Every night, and at other times as well,

he would draw forth his card of "feelings" and run his eye down the list. "Nothing to-day" was the usual result. "I've not felt any one of them." Sometimes he would get a little hope. "Numbers 1 to 5—nothing. But Number 6—well, I did feel a bit like that when I saw those two drunken men being taken to prison. I must try to get it back again. O Lord, I thank Thee for giving me a little of Number 6—give me some more, I beseech Thee. And oh, for Thy great Name's sake, give me Numbers 1 to 5." But the heavens were deaf.

The spiritual pathologist who was doctoring George's soul, having failed in his first course of treatment, tried another. He presented the boy on his eighteenth birthday with the works of John Bunyan; and his aunt—the one to whom he had been rude—added Law's *Serious Call*. Into this literature he launched forth, the Simeonite and the aunt standing on the banks, as it were, to give him his sailing directions. He relaxed none of his efforts. He was willing to embark on the very waters of death, on the bare chance of finding "saving truth." He would have

eagerly swallowed the bitterest soul-medicine; and when medicine failed he would have submitted to the cruelest surgery, even to a capital operation, without anæsthetics, had such a thing been proposed. As a matter of fact, in his desperation, he did macerate his poor body in many ways, until the thing was discovered by the Simeonite and checked as a Romish error—of which George stood in the utmost fear. He spent whole nights in agonising prayer. The result was that for the second time he passed out of the care of his ghostly physician and was handed over to those who heal the body. This brought some relief to his weary nerves and palpitating heart.

Then it was that George plunged into his birthday literature. He began with *The Pilgrim's Progress* and followed it with *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. And now his miseries came back upon him in a flood. Let no one suppose, however, that they bore the least resemblance to the appalling woes of John Bunyan. They did not—and there was the trouble. To be able to reproduce the Bunyan-agony was the very thing that George

desired. But he could not reproduce it, though he tried with all his might. He would have given a king's ransom to feel that Satan was at his elbow. But Satan never came near him. George took solitary walks in the darkness and tried to imagine that the whispering winds were the voices of fiends. But he knew very well that they were nothing of the sort. One night he actually found himself praying to the devil to come out and fight him. But the devil was as deaf as the rest—at all events, he was in no humour for a fight with George Marsh. Then he stole out all alone to a dark lane, the high banks crowned with interlocking trees that formed a tunnel. This was the Valley of Humiliation. An old ilex grew in the ditch. As George, who was now growing short-sighted, saw the shadowy form swaying in the wind, he tried to feel sure that Apollyon was advancing in all his fury. But he didn't feel sure. Nevertheless, on coming up to the tree, he made three passes at it with his stick, and then struck it a heavy, back-handed blow. The tree didn't care a pin, and George knew it didn't care. He tried to make the tree

say, "Now, I have thee," and, finding it silent, he stabbed into its foliage again and again until a swaying branch knocked his cap off.

On another occasion the poor boy tied his old school-books into a big bundle, which he strapped on to his shoulders like a knapsack, and walked a long mile to another tree, a tree with bare arms outstretched, which suggested Something to George. He wanted to know "what it felt like," and thought that the experiment might prompt the beginning of "the real experience." Coming to the foot of the tree his back was nearly broken, and the buckle of the strap refusing to yield, George, who felt he couldn't stand the weight another minute, cut the leather with his pocket-knife. The bundle fell to the ground with a heavy thud and burst, and his big Latin dictionary flounced into a puddle; the mud can be seen on its pages even unto this day. He spent the rest of the night cleaning his books, for the boy was fearful of being found out.



## II

His failure to "act Bunyan" caused him an infinite melancholy, and well-nigh broke his heart. This was his condition when the time came for him to go to the University. He was no longer the healthy boy who had discharged his pea-shooter at a cat. He was a tall, weedy youth of nineteen; there was a stoop in the narrow shoulders, and an ugly wrinkle between the eyes; he wore spectacles and looked on the ground.

He was sent to Oxford with a view, of course, to taking Orders. He was entered at a college where the Church influence was strong, and of the sort approved by his spiritual guides. "It will all come right in due time," said the Simeonite to George's parents. "The work of grace is only being delayed—no doubt for wise reasons. It is often so. We must wait in faith and prayer. I doubt if George will find peace until he begins the active work of the ministry." From which remark it will be seen that the excellent man was at his wits' end. To George, he said "Don't

be over-anxious, my dear boy. Continue to pray and to read your Bible. One day you will feel something break within you, and then the new birth will begin."

So the boy went to Oxford expecting something to "break" within him. He kept a diary, and each entry for the first six weeks concluded with these words, "Nothing has broken to-day."

But the pressure had been forced to the bursting-point, and an explosion was inevitable. In the seventh week of his first term the explosion took place; but it assumed a form and produced results which no one in the least expected or foresaw. In this it resembled all the conversions that have taken place since the world began.

One day he was on the tow-path watching the practice of his College crew. He wished he could row. His long arms and legs, he thought, would give him a splendid reach; and no doubt with a little training he could straighten his back and broaden his chest.

The wind was keen, and the water was rough. The coach on the tow-path was abusing Number 4 for his bad recovery,

and Number 4 was listening to the coach with an air of admirable docility. Somehow Number 4, as he listened to the coach, reminded George of himself as he used to listen to the Simeonite; and for a moment religion and rowing were strangely mixed up in his mind.

The Cox cried "Paddle!" and the eight oars struck the water, once, twice, three times. Then came confusion. Something was wrong with Number 4. He failed to recover; his sliding seat gave way with a crash; his oar was in the air, his body at the bottom of the boat, and in an instant the whole thing was overturned and the crew were struggling in the water. The coach swore a mighty oath, the dripping crew waded ashore, and a thought flashed like lightning through George's brain. "By —!" he said aloud, echoing the words of the coach, "it's all one piece of humbug from beginning to end. I'm going to chuck religion."

Had the youth paused to analyse what he "felt like" at that moment he would have noticed that he was feeling almost everything which the Simeonite had said

he would feel at his first effective encounter with saving truth. He would have noticed that a great burden had rolled from his back and that his body, his whole being, was buoyant as air. He would have been aware that something "had broken" within him; he might even have heard it "go snap" in the middle of his head. He would have perceived a strange luminosity in the atmosphere, and he would have heard voices saying anything it pleased him to make them say.

But he had no leisure for introspection. He was in a hurry to do something and was busily thinking what he would do. He resembled a friend of mine who studies seismography in a Midland town. This gentleman had been longing all his life for an earthquake to shake his house. Hearing that some shocks had been felt in the neighbourhood, he sent his seismograph to the makers to be adjusted. Hardly had he parted with his instrument when a slight shock, the only shock felt in that city for a hundred years, rattled the crockery on his dinner-table. So it was with George. His conversion took place at an unguarded moment when the means

for recording it were out of gear. He failed, therefore, to make a mental entry of its arrival; thereby inadvertently proving the genuineness of the occurrence.

George rushed from the tow-path, made his way to the nearest public-house, and ordered a glass of beer—a drink which he held in peculiar abhorrence. He took a sip and replaced the glass on the counter; a sweep emptied it the moment he turned his back. Next he went to the tobacconist and bought a pipe and an ounce of tobacco—which he never smoked; thence, to the bookseller's for the last sensational novel—which he never read. Arrived at his College room, his first act was to fling Law's *Serious Call* out of the window; five minutes later he went out into the quad and picked it up. This was the beginning of George's education in iniquity—but he never followed it up.

His conversion was not so complete—what conversion ever is?—as to effect a total breach between his present and his past. The idea of some entirely new state of being, arriving with cataclysmic abruptness, and bringing with it a new consciousness, continued to haunt him. This idea,

which he had first imbibed under the forms of the evangelical tradition, now took other forms, but its principle remained unchanged. As the artists in *Punch* exaggerate the length of the Prime Minister's nose while respecting the general formula of its construction, thereby endowing him with what is, to all intents and purposes, a false nose, but without doing injustice to the original, so George obtained his new opinions by slightly caricaturing the salient features of the old.

It is true that George had become a prominent member of that drastic body—the Young Men's Latter-Day Association. But if you had listened to him as he aired his views at the weekly meetings of the Association, on the New Era, the New Order, the New Morality, the New Thought, the New Man, the New Woman, the New Everybody, the New Everything, you would have recognised at once that he was still preaching the New Birth, with a slight difference of accent and terminology. At nineteen years of age he was an adept in the Signs of the Times; and his Scheme of Salvation was if anything more completely articulated, and assuredly more

dogmatically enforced, than is that other Scheme, to indoctrinate him in which the good Simeonite had taken such pains. His Eschatology was worked out with that attention to minute detail which becomes a great commander in planning a campaign. If you wished to know what would happen to yourself under the New Order—whether, for example, you would be allowed to retain your latch-key—George could tell you. Latch-keys would be public property. If you asked what treatment would be meted out to Mrs Brown, who was just going to have her seventeenth baby, George could tell you. Mrs Brown would receive from the State a retiring pension and a medal. A certain group of young gentlemen called “we” had settled all that; they had the Future in their waistcoat-pockets, and they were going to stand no nonsense at all. These young gentlemen lived in close and conscious proximity to a Great Event—a trait so precious, whether in youth or in age, that if egotism or excess should appear among its by-products we can welcome both. Egotistical and extravagant they undoubtedly were. In their own eyes they were the Saints of the New

Order and the Elect of the Future, and they had little doubt that when the Great Upheaval came, as it assuredly would come in a few years, the brains of the entire human race would be turned inside out, while they themselves, so to speak, would be caught up into the air and set on thrones to judge the nations of the world. These Eschatologists were most excellent young men; the root of the matter was in them; they were pursuing the Infinite after their own fashion—and half of them are now dead. Some died in their mothers' arms, and the lilacs bloom above their graves; India has accounted for others; one, still a youth, the war correspondent of a London paper, was shot through the heart while taking notes in a square attacked by savages; one, grown grey in many battles, was blown to fragments by a shell in South Africa, and all they ever found of him was the hand on which he wore his dead wife's wedding-ring. Of the survivors I know of one who is an Archdeacon; another is a captain of industry and a philanthropist; and only the other day a third, who is a judge, broke down before the court while sentenc-



ing a wretched murderer to death. Fundamentally they were not mistaken. The Great Event has happened to most of them, and proved more surprising than their most confident predictions or their wildest dreams.

I am sorry to say that dissensions presently broke out in the Young Men's Latter-Day Association, and some of the more prominent members were driven into exile. From what the schism arose I do not know; perhaps it was the Election of the Committee, though I rather think it was the Constitution of the Universe. Among the exiles was George Marsh. He was not aware of any change in his principles; but there was some bad temper, and it was a noteworthy circumstance that from the date of his expulsion the books which had been previously open on George's table were now stowed away on the least accessible of his shelves.

### III

THOSE were stirring times for young men. The enthusiasm created by Carlyle had hardly begun its present lamentable decline;

the bloom was still fresh on the *Origin of Species*; Huxley was firing great shot at the Towers of Darkness; Tennyson was in song; Ruskin was hard at work. Matthew Arnold, too, was at his best; and George Marsh, who began to browse in fresh fields, read *Literature and Dogma*, then a new book.

Now George, whether by temperament or by early education, was never happy save in pursuit of a Secret. The locked chamber of a New Experience always adjoined the plain apartment in which he lived, and George's business throughout was to find the key to that chamber and get the Experience that awaited him within. The experience that is was never good enough for him; the experience that is not, but may be, was what he must have. *Literature and Dogma* was therefore the very book to lay hold of him. For *Literature and Dogma*, as every one knows, deals with a certain Secret, held forth as the vital principle of religion. Now with religion George had resolved that he would have no more to do. But when he found, in conjunction with the denial of his rejected faith, the positive assertion of a

new Secret, the young man at once pricked up his ears and became docile. The Secret seemed genuine. He resolved, therefore, that he would have it by hook or by crook, and he applied himself, heart and soul, to follow the directions given in *Literature and Dogma*. Not being sceptical by nature, he didn't pause to ask whether a Secret which worked so mightily while it remained a Secret would retain its efficacy after it had been found out and retailed in the booksellers' shops at so much a copy.

Behold him then with *Literature and Dogma* under the lamp, a blue pencil in his fingers, a notebook at his elbow. He learns that the Secret consists in a certain sweet reasonableness; that the way to the Secret is Conduct; that Conduct is three-fourths of life; that Religion is morality touched with Emotion; that there is a Something, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness; that the righteous have experimental proof that this Something is real. Each of these propositions is duly recorded. George is a little perplexed as to their relations with one another; but he infers that if he duly attends to Conduct the various propositions will relate them-

selves in a New Experience and so give him possession of the Secret.

Poor boy! You are too deeply in earnest; you are repeating your old mistake. If you would take what is written as so many themes for Literature, or as a true record of what can never be exactly repeated, or even as matter to preach about, it would all prove manageable enough. But these things will bring you into trouble if you read them as fixed Sailing Directions for the human soul on the fateful seas of life. And that, unfortunately, is what you are going to do!

Without delay George proceeded to put his new recipe into practice. He betook himself to Conduct; made it not three-fourths merely but the whole of his life, or very nearly the whole; put himself under the severest self-discipline and studied Conduct with an ardour truly admirable. I am afraid—indeed, I know—that he encountered much bewilderment, and found many moral questions hard to decide which had seemed easy enough before he began to think about them; moreover, he sometimes lost sight of great principles in the confusion of detail which attends their

application. But he did his best; no Rabbi of olden time could have found much fault with him. He knew, of course, the dangers of self-righteousness, but guarded himself against them by a method of his own. What with one thing and another he had a hard time of it. But he stuck to his task, hourly expecting the Secret to disclose itself, and looking into himself for signs that the New Experience was coming to the birth.

Now I am not going to say that all this effort was wasted. From what I know of George Marsh I am inclined to think that it did him more good than all the rest of his education put together, and there are several young gentlemen of my acquaintance whom I would urgently advise to take a leaf out of this part of George's book. None the less it must be recorded that in one sense the enterprise was a failure. True, he found a Secret and got a New Experience; but the Secret he found was not the Secret he sought, and the New Experience he got was not the New Experience he expected. Furthermore—and this is the most important of all—it was not till nearly thirty years had elapsed

after the cessation of these efforts that he realised they had yielded him any Secret or any Experience whatsoever.

His great difficulty lay not in the practice of morality—though this was often hard enough—but in securing “the touch of emotion.” The morality came, but the emotion seemed to linger. Here, however, he was again mistaken; and the mistake was a repetition, with a difference, of one he had made on former occasions. He had formed in advance a certain notion of what it would “feel like”; but it felt like something else. When, therefore, the emotion came—and it came in abundance—it was so entirely different from what he had expected that he failed, as before, to recognise that it was emotion at all.

George had expected exultations and splendid agonies. What came was depression and carking care. When he read the word “emotion” on the printed page he thought of thrills, of splendours, of ecstasies; of Love that is mightier than death; of Peace that is deeper than the sea; of Compassions that moan like the winds; of luxurious griefs; of overwhelming visions from the mountain-tops of life; of music,

starry spaces, and the calm of ancient groves and vast cathedrals; of the flowers that never fade and the odours that are wafted from Elysian fields. These were the emotions whose "touch" upon morality would clothe the dry bones with flesh and put the living spirit within them. But George had not reflected that there are emotions of another order; that these, too, may "touch" morality and transform it not into the likeness of life, but into the very dust of death. And these were the emotions that actually came and "touched" poor George; they came in secret; came like thieves in the night; came without any labels on their backs; came and went without suffering him to know their names or even to observe that they had come. Instead of the scent of flowers he felt the prick of thorns; instead of exultations there was anxiety; instead of the victor's crown there was the yoke of self-contempt; instead of great music there was the crack of whips; instead of the joy of attainment there was the lurking horrible fear that he was becoming a moral prig. With all these unexpected emotions there mingled a feeling of bitter disappointment at the non-

arrival of the emotions that were expected ; and this bitterness was itself the principal emotion that touched the morality of George Marsh. In fine, he was intensely miserable, and his misery was his emotion. " Oh, wretched man that I am," he might have cried, " who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? "

He was satisfied that he had made no mistakes. He was confident that he understood the construction of this new machine, that he had put the parts together in the right order, that he had got his steam to the right pressure, that he had pulled the levers in the right way. How was it, then, that the wretched thing wouldn't work ? Why, of course, there was only one explanation. " It was a piece of humbug from beginning to end. It never had worked and never could work. I'm going to chuck morality," said George.

#### IV

FOR a whole twelvemonth or more George lived under the firm belief that he had " chucked " morality. And he certainly



did "chuck" it in the papers he read before the College Dialectical Society, and in temerarious conversations with certain gentlemen who were twice his own age. These gentlemen were much concerned for his future, and took pains to convince him of the error of his ways—or rather of his words. The result was that his "views" became more startling and scandalous. He even went so far as to sketch the ground-plan of one or two splendid sins. Meanwhile he was living a most innocent life and reading poetry. He began with Swinburne, and in due course—for he was no slave to chronological order—he came to Wordsworth.

His first attitude to Wordsworth was contemptuous. But he was too well-born, and too innocent, to keep that up for long. Besides, there was something in Wordsworth that touched the deepest spring of his being. It was the hint of another world—a world of New Experience, to which entry could be found by the lifting of a veil. Before George had finished the second reading of "the Prelude" he had repented of his resolve to "chuck" morality. Then he turned to "the Excursion," some parts of which had a

reviving effect on the abandoned resolution. But when he came to the Vision of the Wanderer, he was completely conquered. He laid down the volume with a fixed resolve that that Vision should be his own. The prophets, he thought, had deceived him, but the poet cannot lie.

His preparations were made with the forethought which characterised all his spiritual experiments. He studied the Vision and everything that has been written about it. He made acquaintance with certain philosophers who have used the Vision as a text. He even went into a kind of training for the Great Event, kept a watch on his thoughts, took lonely walks into the country, and practised Visions from the modest hill-tops of the neighbourhood. George was a little disconcerted with the result of these preliminary exercises; but he set it down to the tameness of the local scenery.

He had ascertained the exact spot in the Lake District at which the Vision of the Wanderer is supposed to have occurred, and he had taken up his quarters at the nearest hotel. He waited until the conditions were perfect for the experiment; watched the barometer, and felt his pulse;

deferred action the first day because the clouds threatened; started the second, and then came back because his head was not clear. On the third day health and weather were both favourable, and, with prayers on his lips, he took his way to the sacred spot. Arrived there, all seemed to promise him fair. He drew the volume from his pocket and read the Vision aloud. As he read, the sun rose in all its splendour, and the world was bathed in glory. George waited for Something to Happen.

Nothing happened.

“Nothing happened.” These were his own words when he told me the story in after years. But they are not true to the fact, and they illustrate once more the tendency of his introspective faculty to overlook what was essential in his experience. Something *did* happen—something not in the formula. *The whole experiment fell flat as any thrice-told tale.* He was looking at sublimities beyond the power of words; the world was drenched in loveliness and light; but for any ecstasy produced in George he might as well have been gazing at a miserable collection of stage properties. Under other circumstances

he would have taken a healthy soul's delight in what he saw, and would certainly have forgotten himself. But at this moment the mountains wore a perky air of artificiality, as though they had got themselves up for their parts; the heavens had been painted blue by some self-conscious impressionist; the clouds seemed made of cotton-wool; all was mechanism and vulgar pretence; and so far was that would-be visionary from entering into rapt communion with Nature that never in his life did he experience so deep a sense of loneliness and utter separation from the world. His self-consciousness became intense, and it was the consciousness of an outcast. He fixed his eyes on the loftiest peak, and the impression deepened that the thing was sham. He looked up to the sky, and became suddenly conscious that his right boot was pinching him. He listened to the bleating of sheep in the valley below, and instantly, to his shame, he thought of mutton-chops. A shy primrose attracted his attention; he recalled Peter Bell, stared at the primrose for full five minutes, concluded that he had never seen so uninteresting a flower, and then, feeling a sharp pain in his eyeballs, remembered

the warnings of his oculist. Was some spirit mocking him? Or was Nature offended at his errand? With these questions in his mind he rushed down the mountain, ate a scanty breakfast, packed his copy of Wordsworth at the bottom of his trunk, and took the next train home.

## V

IT may be thought that with three disappointments placed to his credit George would now abandon his attempt to obtain Initiation into the Mysteries. But the chains of destiny are not so easily broken. Fate had decreed that he should turn a blind eye to his experience and attend only to his experiments. The New Experience for which he was ever on the watch was to come as the result of a New Experiment conducted according to formula. If an experiment failed, it was because the formula was faulty and needed amendment. George was none of your faint-hearted seekers who abandon the quest on the failure of their first attempts. He thought of Science, and remembered the

disappointments of the laboratory. He saw the great discoverers testing hypothesis after hypothesis, conducting fruitless experiments by the score, trying this and trying that until in a happy moment they hit upon the formula which covered the facts. Had he experienced fifty disappointments instead of three, he would have proceeded with unabated ardour to make the fifty-first.

The next experiment lasted over twenty years. When George had taken his degree he resolved, with the advice of his tutors, to devote himself to the study of Philosophy. In a few years he became a notable exponent of Pantheism, wrote a book, and received an academical appointment. It was whispered that he had become a Buddhist.

During the whole of that period he seemed to himself on the very eve of success, never quite attaining, but so near attainment as to leave no doubt in his mind that he had found the right formula at last. Meanwhile the river of life was pouring its waters under the mill, and every moment marked the birth of a New Experience and the initiation into a Mystery. But he was not attending to that. As usual, he was busy with an Experiment.

In his pantheistic period George was fully convinced that the sensible world is an illusion, and that he himself was no more than a stain on the radiance of Eternity. The trouble was that his "feelings" didn't keep pace with his convictions, and this emotional impotence was exceedingly hard to cure. He found himself utterly unable to "realise" the illusoriness of the world—which is not to be wondered at; and he had to confess that in himself he didn't "feel like" a stain—on Eternity or on anything else. Nay, there was something more; and students of Marsh's *System of Philosophy* will remember that the matter is fully discussed in the chapter entitled "The Inverse Ratio of Conviction and Feeling." The fact was, that by as much as the logic became irrefragable which demonstrates that the world is an illusion by so much the more did the "feeling" grow that the world is intensely real. He found, moreover, that the very ease with which he could prove, on paper, that he was Nothing gave him, oddly enough, the "feeling" that he was Something. He also noticed that the process of handling particular things by the Pantheistic Logic had a kind

of indurating effect upon their substance, in consequence of which those things refused to melt at the moment when, theoretically, they ought to have dissolved themselves into the All. Again it was rather disconcerting; but he set it down to some defect, or excess, in his imaginative faculty.

He resolved, therefore, to make himself acquainted with the facts of Conversion as recorded in the mystical literature of all ages, in the hope that these would incidentally reveal what was wrong with him. For ten years he devoted himself to this study with unremitting ardour. The result was that he became an authority on mysticism, obtained qualifications which caused him to be appointed to his lectureship in the Psychology of Religion, and discovered the "Three Laws of Conversion" which have produced a revolution in the spiritual realm, and made the discoverer famous all over the world. But at the end of it all George Marsh remained an unconverted man.

Then occurred the incident related at the beginning of this narrative.



## VI

As the lightning which shineth from the one part of heaven even unto the other, so is the coming of everything that is critically important for the human mind. No prophet can foretell the hour, the place, or the form. The secret chambers are empty; the wilderness utters no sound; two men are in one bed; two women are grinding at the mill; and the pendulum of time swings undisturbed. Suddenly the Sign of the Son of Man leaps across the sky and astonishment falls on the face of all the earth. The effect is visible, but the cause is hidden; and History, seeking to recover it, can find no more than the Shadow of a Shade.

There happened to be living at this time, in a remote part of the country, a certain poor and solitary man, the only religious genius I have ever seen in the flesh. A stream, famous for trout, ran across the line of this Poor Man's beat: and it was not altogether without design on my part that George Marsh, who was an ardent fisherman, spent a summer on the banks of that stream. But later on—through the

intervention of another person—the two became friends.

From that time his luck as a fisherman seemed to desert him. Day after day he came back with his basket empty. But the truth was that, as often as not, he had never cast a fly on the water. He had been wandering in solitary places seeking out the Poor Man.

“He’s a most extraordinary person,” said George to me.

“So are we all,” I added.

“True. That’s precisely what I have learnt from him. Do you know, he’s the only religious man I ever met whose religion was not at least three parts an imitation. In him the proportions are reversed. I wish I had known him before I wrote my big book. He has upset one of my theories.”

“He has upset several of mine,” I said.

Five years later George Marsh passed away after a lingering and painful illness. I saw him often during that period, and never did he appear to me a disappointed man.

Once he said to me, “I am thinking of writing my Autobiography. It would throw

some light on the Psychology of Religion ; more, by far, than anything I have written hitherto. Of all the facts I have discovered in my studies, none is so wonderful as the course of my own life. It has been an amazing experience. As I lie here and recall what has happened, it seems to be that I have been an instrument in the hands of some inscrutable Power. At times I fall into a state of pure astonishment. But I am glad that things were as they have been ; after all, nothing has come amiss, nothing has been unkindly done."

Later on, when the end was drawing near, I found him with Harnack's *Wesen des Christentums* open on the coverlet. "Somehow," he said to me, "I think that Harnack has missed the essence of Christianity. If a man tried to be a Christian on the lines of Harnack's definition<sup>1</sup> he would get into all my old difficulties."

"Where do *you* find the essence of Christianity?" I asked.

"In the Parable of the Great Surprise," he answered.

"Which do you mean?" I asked. "All

<sup>1</sup> "Eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God."—T. B. Saunders' translation.

the Parables are 'Great Surprises' in a sense."

"Yes; but the one I mean is not merely a surprising Parable; it is the Parable of a Surprise." And then he began to quote, "Lord, *when* saw we thee an hungered," and so on to the end.

"George," I added after a little, "*He* never said what people expected He was going to say."

"Nor *did* what people thought He ought to do. His sayings are like great explosions, and His deeds are much the same. At least"—and here he seemed to correct himself—"it is the unexpected which has left its impress on the record. Miracles are the only fitting atmosphere for such a character. By the way, I have an idea for a new theory of the Dual Nature of Christ which you may add, if you like, to the multitude already in existence." And a faint smile came over the wan features of my friend.

"Tell it me."

"He was Man in so far as He did what was expected, and God in so far as He took the world by surprise."

"Rank heresy," I said, "from every point of view. Orthodoxy would be furious

to hear it; and scientific theology would condemn you for degrading the Modern Conception of God.”

“Perhaps both parties would make some allowance,” he answered, “if they had had an experience like mine. It’s no uncomfortable faith even for a man in my condition. Life and death and all that lies beyond fall into the same category. Or rather they fall into no category at all. I’ve not done with surprises. There are others in store for me.” And his white fingers began to fumble with the sheets.

In the Chapel of his College a brass tablet has been erected to the memory of George Marsh. It simply gives his name and age, and states that “he was a distinguished member of this University.” At his wife’s request no mention was made of his services to the Psychology of Religion. But she caused these words to be added at the foot, and I think she must have heard them from his own lips, for he had often used them even to me—

“Marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

## VIII. HELEN RAMSDEN

“THIS,” I said, “is the gem of your collection.” I was looking at the water-colour drawing of a girl’s head, which my friend had just produced from a locked cabinet. It was the work of a great artist. I was familiar with every other picture in the collection, which was famous, but this sketch of De Lamar’s I had never seen before. And I wondered why George Marsh should keep it out of sight.

“Yes,” said he, “it is one of the finest specimens of the artist’s early work.”

“It ought to be exhibited,” said I. “It shows a quality rarely found in De Lamar’s later periods. I should say it is unique. And the girl’s face is a thing of beauty that ought not to be hidden. To look at such a face is enough to renew one’s faith in humanity.”

“On my death,” said the other, “the drawing will go to the National Gallery. Till then it will remain under lock and key. As

you say, it is the gem of the collection ; but, believe me, it is also the most terrible thing I possess. You said just now that the girl's face renews your faith in humanity. And well it may. But let me tell you that the story connected with that picture might shake your faith in something else."

"In what ?" I asked.

"In the perfect rationality of the universe," he answered.

George Marsh and I had been for a long walk over the cliffs that afternoon, and, after the manner of fallen spirits, had neglected the glories of sea and sky to argue on the infinite perplexities of human fate. Needless to say we had not unravelled them. Discussing the outlook of modern thought, he had stated his expectation of a speedy resuscitation of the belief in the Devil, and perhaps in a plurality of malign powers playing tricks with human life. This, he argued, was the only alternative to the admission of blind chance in the affairs of the universe. Then he began to talk about Special Providence, and said, with some emphasis, that the evidence for this was more extensive than that on which Science based its belief in

the reign of Universal Law. "The idea that bright angels and black are contending for the souls of men," he added, "is as sound an explanation of the course of human life as any which Science has put forward in modern times."

Marsh's life had just entered upon its final phase. His conversation at that time was often unbalanced, and constantly recurred to these and such-like themes. I knew that he was passing through a mental crisis. His philosophic habits were disarranged; he was enveloped, for the time being, in an atmosphere of mystery; all kinds of obscurantisms were attracting him; violent reactions were going on—not without giving birth to many a swift insight, to flashes that came and went without shedding a lasting illumination on anything. I knew, also, a little of the causes which had produced the change; but there was much in the background at which I could only guess.

It was in vain that I recited all the stock arguments for disproving the Devil and exposing the absurdity of chance. They made upon my friend no impression whatsoever.

"Amiable theorisings," he said, "out of all relation to the real facts of life. Life



is mocking you at every turn ; strange that you do not see it ! The merest footnote to history is enough to disprove all your theories. Thousands of such are to be found for the looking. One has recently come to my own knowledge for which there is no place in any system of philosophy ever expounded by man."

"Don't be too sure of that," I said ; "some of the philosophers have cast their nets pretty far."

"That may be," he answered ; "but their mesh is not fine enough, and all the little fishes get through. And it is the little fishes that have the secrets in their mouths. My footnote is a little fish, so little, indeed, that I doubt if you could make a mesh fine enough to catch him."

"Let me hear your footnote."

"Not now," he said. "My footnote has a picture attached to it ; and you must see the picture before studying the text. Wait till we reach home."

"No eyes save yours and mine, and those of one other person, have seen that drawing since it came into my possession ten years ago," said Marsh.

“ You will tell me its story ? ” I said.

“ I wish you to hear it,” he answered. “ But the story is long and rather involved. Let us go into the garden ; and put some cigars in your pocket—you will need them.”

My friend’s house lay in a sheltered nook on high land facing the Atlantic. The summer night was falling, and we could hear the sea breaking in hoarse cadence on the rocks below.

“ The portrait of the girl,” said my friend, “ was once the property of a certain Dr M’Bain who practised in the parish where I was born. When I was a boy in the ’sixties I was a constant companion of the Doctor. He became my guardian after my father’s death, and I believe he was deeply attached to me. I used to accompany him on his rounds, and as we drove about the country lanes he would make me his confidant in regard to many things I was not old enough to understand. He was a bachelor.

“ Our family left the neighbourhood in 1877, and it was not till thirty years afterwards that I visited the place again—as I shall presently relate. I occasionally saw M’Bain, and continued to correspond with him until his death, in 1901.

“The whole of his fortune, which was by no means large, was bequeathed to three old maiden ladies, named Ramsden, who lived in our village. To me he left his books, his collection of shells—for he was a great conchologist—and that portrait. There was some irregularity about the will, and neither the books nor the shells ever reached me. But the portrait came, and with it a letter marked, ‘Not to be opened till after my death.’ This letter stated that if I would read what was written on the back of the picture it would explain many things in the Doctor’s life; that he wished me to retain it during my lifetime, and to bequeath it by will to the National Gallery. ‘There is no doubt,’ the letter added, ‘that it will be accepted, but I do not wish it to be known that the picture has ever been mine. If you live to a normal age, my name will be forgotten long before you die.’

“On taking the portrait out of its wrappings, I found written on the back, in the Doctor’s handwriting, these words—you will see them on turning it over—

“‘*Helen Ramsden, as I first knew her in 1854.*’

“On reading this I was greatly surprised.

I had a distinct recollection of the Ramsden family, and had often heard their history, which was a strange one, from the Doctor's lips. He was much given to talking to me about them, and of Helen Ramsden in particular. I was old enough at the time to conclude that there had been some kind of love-affair between the Doctor and her. But what surprised me was that he should never have told me that the drawing, which I had often seen and admired in old days, was the portrait of Helen. Nor was the fact, so far as I am aware, known to any one else. He would sometimes show me the drawing, which he kept in a portfolio, and say, always in the same words, 'What do you think of that, my boy, for a handsome girl?' And on my answering that I thought 'she was very handsome indeed,' he would add, 'Take my advice, George. If ever you meet a girl in the least like that, marry her, and marry her quick, lest another fellow get ahead of you.' But he would never satisfy my curiosity as to the subject of the portrait.

"The Ramsdens were well-off, and lived in a comfortable old house which had once been the Rectory. There was old

Mrs Ramsden, who died before we left the neighbourhood, and three middle-aged daughters. Two of these we knew very well; they were gifted women, and were frequent visitors at our house. The third, Helen, was a chronic invalid, and was never seen outside the grounds. She was, people said, permanently confined to her bed, which would sometimes be drawn on to the balcony in front of the house. The bed, with the old lady or the two elder Miss Ramsdens beside it, could be seen from a certain point in the road, and I well remember the feeling of mystery which the sight of it always gave me as a child.

“The story M'Bain used to tell me about them was as follows:—

“In the year 1855 the Ramsdens were living in Cheltenham. This was the time of the Crimean War, and ladies' societies were being formed for the purpose of making bandages for the wounded and garments for the men in the field. One day Helen Ramsden, with a number of other girls, was thus occupied, making knitted stockings, in some drawing-room at Cheltenham, when one of the girls, I believe it was Helen herself, proposed that each of them should

write a note addressed to a soldier and conceal it in the foot of a stocking. The proposal was promptly repressed by some older woman, but Helen managed to write a note that very evening, and hide it in the manner proposed. After that, she and two or three of the others repeated the practice at intervals. The notes, of which you can easily imagine the character, were written by the girls in the Ramsdens' home, where Helen would entertain them with all sorts of nonsense about the dashing officers who would come home from the war and prostrate themselves at the writers' feet. And the fun was the more exciting through the difficulty of escaping detection by the duenna who presided over the weekly sewing-meetings, and had, it seems, got some inkling of what was in the wind.

“Some ingenuity was displayed in the concealment of these missives. The hiding-place for most was the stocking-foot; others were stitched into the pockets of flannel waistcoats, or even into the collars and wristbands of shirts. They had to be so hidden as to ensure that the soldiers would find them, and, at the same time, to escape detection by anybody else. Several are

known to have reached their destinations, and, in more than one instance, to have produced trouble for the fair writers.

“The recipient of one of them, who served in the trenches before Sebastopol, is living at the present moment in a London Lunatic Asylum. He has sewn the letter into his coat, immediately beneath his Crimean medals, and swears that it was written expressly for him by a Princess of the royal blood, to whom he is going to be married in St Paul’s Cathedral on his next birthday. The poor old fellow, who is otherwise quite harmless, threatens to take the life of any person daring to lay a finger on the precious scrap of paper, and he talks of nothing else from morning to night. He spends most of his time in a large wicker chair with his crutches by his side, suspecting every stranger of designs on his treasure, and whenever one approaches he raises a crutch and, shaking it at the intruder, cries out, ‘Damn you, keep off! Damn you, keep off!’

“Another of the notes is said to be in the possession of the family of a famous General, and to be the basis of a remarkable story made public in a recent memoir of the mid-Victorian period.

“A third is also in existence, but in a place from which it is not likely to be recovered. Of that you shall hear presently.

“In the spring of 1855 Helen became engaged to a young officer named Gair, who was under orders to join his regiment at the seat of war. I have no doubt that this was the person whom M'Bain had in mind when he spoke of ‘another fellow who might get ahead of one.’ This, of course, put a stop to the notes in the stockings; though it appears that Helen never confessed to her lover what she had been doing.

“Barely had the officer arrived in the Crimea when the British forces made their disastrous attack on the Redan. The regiment to which Gair belonged took part in the action, and, during the retreat which followed, he was wounded in the back of the head by a spent bullet. For many months afterwards he lay in hospital at Scutari partly paralysed and in great danger. At length, however, news reached the Ramsdens that a definite recovery had set in; though it was not till after the Declaration of the Peace of Paris that Gair was able to make the journey home. He took passage in a private steamship, informing Helen that he



would write to her from Marseilles, where the doctors had ordered him to rest for a week before completing the voyage.

“The letter from Marseilles never arrived. Instead of it came the news that shortly after leaving Malta, while the vessel was at sea, the officer had suddenly disappeared one evening after dinner, leaving nothing behind to account for his disappearance. It could only be conjectured that he had fallen overboard.

“Needless to say, this was a terrible shock to Helen. For some time her mental condition was such that the doctors feared she might become permanently insane. She was convinced that her lover would return, and would lie awake all night listening to every footfall in the road, and jumping wildly out of bed whenever the sound seemed to be approaching the house. Like many another woman under similar circumstances, she became partly deaf through the intense strain of listening for these sounds. However, she was young and vigorous, and before the year was out symptoms of recovery set in, her old beauty returned, and the word was passed round that ‘there would soon be trouble again for the young men.’

“About this time Helen’s father died, leaving the mother and daughters in comfortable though somewhat reduced circumstances; and the family, which belonged to the county, came to live in our village. Helen was now in a condition of partial but assured recovery.

“One day towards the end of 1856 a hired carriage drove to the door, and a Frenchman of military bearing, who spoke English imperfectly, asked to see Miss Helen Ramsden. The maid brought the message, with some confusion, into the drawing-room, where Helen was seated at needlework with her mother and sisters. Without waiting for her mother to say a word, and before any steps could be taken to prevent her, Helen dashed out of the room and joined the Frenchman, who was waiting in the hall. Mrs Ramsden followed as quickly as she could, only to find that Helen had taken the stranger into the garden, dragging him by the arm down the path towards the road. The mother still followed; but Helen, turning round, cried out with great fierceness, ‘Go away. Leave me alone. I don’t want you;’ and Mrs Ramsden retreated.

“For an hour or more Helen could be

seen from the upper windows of the house walking up and down, and engaged in earnest conversation with the Frenchman. Those who passed by noticed they were speaking in French. Then the Frenchman re-entered his carriage, which had come down the road, and Helen, deadly pale and walking slowly, came back into the house.

“Without a word she went straight to her room, undressed, and got into bed. And she never left her bed from that day forward.

“To all entreaties for explanation she would give no answer whatsoever. When urged to say what it all meant, her distress became so great that the medical attendants finally forbade the family to make any further attempt. For a long time it was with the greatest difficulty she could be induced to take food, and she became wasted to a shadow. Little by little the stream of life shrank to a mere thread. But still it flowed, and, ‘for aught I know,’ M'Bain would say to me, ‘it may continue to flow for a long time to come.’ This I remember him saying in 1876, when twenty years had already elapsed since the date of the Frenchman's visit. During the whole of

that time Helen had never once broken her silence on the subject of the interview. She was then about forty-five years of age, and her hair was perfectly white. M'Bain was not her medical attendant, and he had only once been summoned to see her, when threatened by some sudden attack. 'She was wonderfully beautiful still,' he used to say."

"It's a strange story," I said, "but it recalls another I once heard in America about a girl who lost her lover in the Civil War. If your story is finished I'll tell you mine."

"Unfortunately mine is not complete," said my friend; "the worst has yet to come. Light another cigar." He continued—

"I think I told you that I had never visited the old home since our people left the district in 1877. News seldom reached me of what was going on, for all my connections with the place were broken. I knew, of course, that the three Miss Ramsdens were still living when Dr M'Bain died in 1901; and I heard later that, in spite of his legacy, they had become exceedingly poor.

"Last year, however, I seized a chance

opportunity to visit the old place again after more than thirty years' absence. I found the village unchanged. The nearest station was still nine miles away, and the look and manner of the folk were exactly as they used to be. But I realised I was entirely forgotten by the present inhabitants, and, as I walked about, the whole place seemed haunted by ghosts.

“ I spent the afternoon in visiting familiar spots, and about five o'clock I returned to my inn by the deep lane which led down from the Ramsdens' old house to the river—the very lane in which Helen and the Frenchman had walked on the occasion of which I have told you. A vehicle was coming slowly down the lane behind me, and as it approached I turned round to see what it was, hoping, perhaps, to recall some acquaintance in the driver. To my surprise I recognised the old village hearse ; to my surprise, for I knew a funeral was unlikely at that hour of the day. The hearse was a trumpery old thing with glass sides, and I noticed that it was covered with a horse-cloth or some such article. Thinking that it must contain a coffin, I stood aside and uncovered my head.

“ The horse-cloth had partly slipped away from the side of the hearse that was towards me, so that as the vehicle passed I was able to see into the interior. Judge of my surprise when I saw that the occupant was a withered old woman, wrapped in blankets and lying on a mattress. She turned her head on seeing me, and for a moment our eyes met. I can assure you that never in my life, which has not been wanting in strange experiences, do I remember to have been so painfully shocked. I sat down on the bank, trembling all over. The hearse went on, and passed out of sight.

“ Presently an old man, who had been mending the road farther down, stopped his work and, picking up his tools, came towards me.

“ ‘ That be a strange sight, sir,’ he said, jerking his thumb towards the quarter where the hearse had disappeared. ‘ I reckon they might ha’ found t’ old woman a better carriage nor that.’

“ ‘ Who is the woman ? ’ I asked.

“ ‘ That be old Helen Ramsden, that be,’ said the man. ‘ They be a-takin’ she to the Poorhouse. That’s what they be a-doin’ now, sir. Bedridden for many a long year

her's been, sir. But if you'd known the family in times gone by you wouldn't ha' thought it would ever come to that. Why, I minds the time when they lived in a big house and kep' a carriage.'

“ ‘ I knew them,’ I said, ‘ forty years ago. I remember them living in the old Rectory. But I understood that Dr M'Bain had left them a considerable sum of money in 1901.’

“ ‘ A thousand pound it were, sir, and enough to ha' kep 'em comfortable, too. But not a penny of it did they ever get. Have you never 'eard tell o' the lawsuit, sir? It were that nevvvy o' the Doctor's as did it. There were summat wrong in the will, and a pretty lawyer's job they made on it—that they did. But, you see, the old ladies hadn't got no money o' their own to fight the case, and no man-kind as I ever 'eard on to stand up for 'em. It were the nevvvy as did it, sir—and them lawyers a-backin' on him up. A bad lot he were too, sir. And not much good the money did 'im when he got it. Went through it in six months—so I've 'eard tell.’

“ ‘ But the Ramsdens were once well-off,’ I said; ‘ what had become of their own money?’

“ ‘ All went years agone,’ said the man; ‘ summat about the Turks, as I’ve ’eard tell. What bit they’d got left they put in a Buildin’ Society, and that went too, later on. When th’ old Doctor died it turned out as he’d been makin’ ’em a ’lowance for years, and him not a rich man neither, though I’ve ’eard say as he nivver let ’em know who it comed from. After he were gone they went to live in that cottage up the old lane, and many’s the day they’d ne’er a bit o’ nothin’ to eat. My old missis has given ’em a pinch o’ tea and a couple o’ eggs many a time—that she has! The two eldest—you’ll mind there was three on ’em altogether, sir—made a bit, stitchin’ gloves for the big factory in W——, but, lor’ bless yer, it wasn’t enough to keep body and soul together. They had to come on the Parish pretty soon. Old Caroline, that was the tall ’un as allus wore glasses, went blind the year after the Doctor died; I reckon it was stitchin’ the gloves as did it. She died in 1903—or was it 1902? And then there was the little round ’un—Miss Elizabeth we called her—her as used to play the violin. She went a month ago, sudden, and then there warn’t nobody left to look after her as was bed-



ridden—that's old Helen, as just went by in the 'earse—Miss Helen, we used to call her. So they settled it last week as she were to go to the Work'us. I suppose it was the best as they could do. But they might ha' found summat a bit better to take her in than that old 'earse, danged if they mightn't, specially rememberin' who she'd been. P'raps you've 'eard all about her bein' goin' to be married to a young gentleman as went out to the war, and was never 'eard on after he started to come 'ome. Fifty or sixty year ago it was, I reckon. I minds the time by the price o' bread; a shillin' a loaf it were; and not good bread neither, though in them days we didn't get enough to complain of. Well, there was a foreigner, a Frenchman or summat o' that, as come to see her one day when the war was over, and told her something about her young man as she's never got over from that day to this. Knocked her fair silly, that it did; though what it was she'd never tell nobody. I saw 'em both, myself, Miss Helen and the Frenchman, when I come 'ome from my work that day, her with her 'at off, walking up and down this very road like a mad thing. She'd got 'old of his arm and

was sort o' pullin' him along, and him jabberin' away and cryin' like a babby. I remember it as though it was last week. Aye, and a winsome lass she were too, straight as a larch and mettlesome as a blood-mare, wi' enough black 'air on her 'ead to stuff a piller, and a colour in her face like a meller peach. And to think o' her bein' taken to the Work'us in that there 'earse! And her wi' naught but the bitterness o' death to drink for more'n fifty year! Why, nobody wouldn't believe it!'

"I could stand it no longer, so, thrusting a coin into the man's hand 'for old times' sake,' I left him without further speech. You may be sure that I immediately resolved to go to the Workhouse and see what could be done. It was situated in a small market town five miles from the village. Thither I went next day.

"I told the Master who I was, and explained the reasons of my interest in Helen Ramsden. I asked him to bring before the Guardians at their next weekly meeting an offer on my part to make adequate provision for the old woman, with an attendant to look after her. The Master treated me with great courtesy, and gave

me assistance which enabled me to make all the necessary arrangements on the spot. But he warned me that he feared my efforts would be useless, for the old woman was plainly dying. I said nothing at the time about the hearse, for I thought it better not to appear as a hostile critic until my plans for the removal of Helen had been carried out.

“ I then obtained permission to see her. She was, of course, in the Infirmary.

“ A frailer remnant of humanity it would be impossible to imagine. The mass of white hair remained, and this, as it lay spread out on the pillow, seemed to diminish the shrunken face below to an elfish smallness. The long eyebrows were clearly marked, and beneath them was a pair of great eyes, bright, but almost motionless. There were traces of dignity, if not of beauty, in the face, and by an effort of imagination I was able dimly to connect the features with the portrait in your hand. But the emaciation was terrible, and it was hard to conceive how life could maintain itself in such a wasted form. For a time she seemed unconscious of my presence.

“ Then she turned her eyes upon me with

that fixed look of the dying of which one cannot say whether it sees nothing or sees everything. I moved away and spoke to the nurse.

“ ‘She’s been wandering most of the morning, sir,’ said the nurse, ‘but her mind’s clear at times. Tell her your name. Perhaps she’ll recognise you.’

“ ‘I am George Marsh,’ I said; ‘do you remember the Marshes at the Great House?’

“A gleam of intelligence spread over Helen’s face, and in the faintest of whispers she said, ‘Give my love to William and Kate.’ These were the names of my parents, who were long since dead.

“ ‘I am an old friend of Dr M’Bain,’ I said.

“Her look brightened again. ‘Give my dear, dear love to Donald M’Bain—the best of men.’ Then after a pause, ‘I’m keeping two dances for you, Donald—the fifth and the seventh.’ And she continued to murmur inaudibly.

“I went to the window, completely unmanned. After a time the nurse said, ‘I think she wants you to come back to the bedside, sir.’

“I returned to my former position.

Helen's lips were moving, but for some minutes there was no sound that I could hear. Presently the voice returned, and she began to mention names, most of which were unknown to me, prefixing each with the same words—'Give my love,' or 'my dear love,' to So-and-so. At last there was a name which arrested my attention. 'Give my dear love to Captain Cyprien Saint-Albert, of the French Army.' This was repeated several times, always with the words 'of the French Army.'

"You can imagine that I caught eagerly at this name, and to make sure that I had heard it correctly I pronounced it after her. 'Captain Cyprien Saint-Albert?' I said.

"'Yes. Of the French Army. Give him my dear love.'

"Then she turned her face towards the window and lapsed into utter unconsciousness of my presence.

"I left, and returned to my inn. A few hours later word was brought to me that Helen Ramsden was dead.

"Profoundly moved by what I had heard and seen, I lost no time in endeavouring to recover traces of Captain Cyprien Saint-

Albert, hoping against hope that he might still be alive. Through a relative attached to the British Embassy in Paris application was made to the French Ministry of War, and within a few weeks I received the following information:—

“That Captain Cyprien Saint-Albert had served with the French forces in the Crimea; that he had been severely wounded in the action of the Tchernaya; that on returning to France after the conclusion of the war he had been decorated by the Emperor for exceptional gallantry in the field; that he had left the Army in 1858 and entered the Church; that in 1875 he had been appointed Bishop of —, and had held that office until his death in 1907; that his elder brother, M. Marcel Saint-Albert, was still living, at a great age, on the family estate near Toulouse.

“I resolved, at all risks, to open communications with M. Marcel Saint-Albert. Writing as tactfully as I could, I explained that a pathetic family history had come to my knowledge, in which I had reason to believe that his distinguished brother had many years ago played a part; that the last member of this family, Helen Ramsden, had recently died, and that she had men-

tioned the name of Captain Cyprien Saint-Albert a few hours before her death, and had requested me to give him a message. Learning that he was no longer alive, and being anxious to clear up certain obscure features of the story, in which I had good reason to take a deep interest, I now addressed myself to M. Marcel Saint-Albert, in the hope that he would have the goodness to hear my inquiries and to give me any information that might help to elucidate the matter. Such was the bald outline of my letter, and you may be sure that I took pains to phrase it with every precaution which the delicacy of the situation might suggest.

“The reply of M. Marcel Saint-Albert was prompt. He said that his brother, shortly before death, had charged him to make inquiries about the very family whose name I had mentioned, and that he himself had done his best, though without result, to obtain information. Referring to the obscurity of the events with which I had become acquainted, he added that obscurity also rested on certain incidents in his brother’s career; and the letter concluded with an earnest entreaty that I would visit him at his seat, in the hope that by

piecing together the information we severally possessed, the matter might be privately resolved. In so doing, he assured me, we should be guiltless of sacrilegious prying into the secrets of the dead, inasmuch as his noble and beloved brother had intimated his intention to disclose the missing links of the story, and had actually appointed a day for the purpose, when he was unexpectedly stricken by death.

“On receiving this reply, I telegraphed to M. Marcel Saint-Albert that he might expect me in three days.

“Seated in a wheel-chair on a terrace overlooking the gardens of his château M. Marcel Saint-Albert requested me to begin. I repeated the tale precisely as I have told it to you. When I had finished the tears were streaming down the old man’s cheek. For some minutes he was unable to speak.

“‘And now, Monsieur,’ he said at length, ‘have the goodness, I pray you, to show me the portrait of Helen Ramsden.’

“From the portfolio you have just had in your hand, where it has remained unseen from that day to this, I produced De Lamar’s drawing. M. Marcel gazed intently at the



face for a few seconds, then laid the drawing on his knees.

“ ‘Monsieur,’ he said, in a voice of deep emotion, ‘the face is not unknown to me; I have seen it in dreams. And once—— But no, it is wiser to keep silence.’

“ With a sudden movement he replaced the picture in my hands. ‘Ah, mon Dieu!’ he cried, bowing his head and making the sign of the Cross. ‘Leave me for a moment, Monsieur, I implore you.’

“ I walked down the steps that led to the next terrace, and went away some distance. Looking back, I saw that M. Marcel had removed his hat; his white head was bent forward and his hands were clasped on his knees.

“ An attendant came running from one of the doors of the château, stooped over his master, looked into his face, and then, on a motion of the hand, quickly withdrew.

“ Presently I noticed that M. Marcel had covered his head and seemed to be awaiting my return. I came back to his side.

“ ‘Monsieur,’ he said, ‘I know not of what religion you are, and I do not ask. But I beg you, before we proceed further, to pray with me for the repose of Helen Ramsden’s

soul. It will be well-pleasing to God.' And again he uncovered his head.

"I, too, uncovered; and the impulse of prayer, long denied, awoke within me.

"His devotions finished, M. Marcel again began to speak, and I confess that the tenor of his words astonished me. You shall hear them as they were spoken, for they are worth remembering. I wrote them down after the interview; and you may trust my accuracy, for, as you know, I have a good memory for such things. Wait a moment and I will read them to you."

George Marsh went into the house and presently returned with a notebook. "These," he said, "are almost M. Marcel's very words.

"*Tout d'abord permettez-moi, Monsieur, de vous expliquer que j'ai étudié la philosophie depuis ma jeunesse. Les événements dont votre récit me rend capable de compléter l'histoire, confirment mon opinion de la vie humaine qui s'est formée peu à peu dans mon esprit par une réflexion de soixante années. Contrairement à l'enseignement courant de la science et de la philosophie, que je connais toutes deux, je crois que le monde est en somme un amas de désordre. Il n'est pas douteux que l'ordre existe et*

aille sans cesse en augmentant ; c'est un vaste oasis dans un désert infiniment plus vaste, mais son accomplissement et son progrès sont entièrement le travail de l'homme, aidé par Dieu et peut-être par d'autres êtres divins, qui sont engagés avec nous dans cette guerre incessante contre le chaos primitif. C'est la philosophie des anciens Perses, et une plus grande sagesse ne s'est jamais manifestée dans le monde. Je méprise de toute la force de mon cœur et de mon intelligence cette science qui nie toute intervention surnaturelle dans les affaires de ce monde. L'intervention divine, émanant non pas d'une source unique, mais de plusieurs sources, est incessante, et elle est si essentielle au succès des entreprises humaines, que, si elle devait cesser pendant une heure, les efforts des hommes, privés de toute aide, seraient annihilés par le désordre et le hasard.

“ Pardonnez-moi, Monsieur, ceci n'est pas de la superstition. C'est, je vous l'assure, le fruit d'une observation minutieuse du cours de ma propre vie et de la vie des autres hommes. Monsieur, j'ai quatre-vingt sept ans, et l'on ne parle pas à la légère lorsque l'on est au bord du tombeau. Et c'est ma conviction, je vous le repète, qu'il y

a des suites d'évènements dans la vie humaine qui révèlent par leurs moindres détails, l'action d'une main directrice qui n'est pas celle de l'homme. Et il y a d'autres évènements et d'autres circonstances dans lesquelles l'intervention divine ne se fait pas sentir; et l'homme lui-même est aussi privé de soutien. Ici le chaos primitif reparait brusquement et tout ce qui arrive, arrive par hasard. Me demandez-vous; dans quelle classe je range la carrière de mon frère? Avant de poursuivre, je vais vous le dire. Elle est entièrement l'œuvre de Dieu. Chaque détail que vous m'avez raconté et tout ce que je vais y ajouter maintenant, porte la marque certaine de l'intervention divine,—marque qu'une étude qui a duré des années m'a appris à reconnaître sans risquer de me tromper. N'attribuez aucun de ces évènements au hasard, Monsieur, je vous en prie. D'autres champs sont ouverts au hasard, et ses opérations sont révélées par des évènements d'un autre type. Croire autre chose; selon les enseignements de notre science superficielle, c'est là la superstition, la pire et la plus stupide de toutes les idolâtries auxquelles l'homme ait jamais sacrifié son âme. Pour

l'âme noble et brave tout arrive par la volonté de Dieu. Seules, les âmes indignes sont abandonnées aux assauts du hasard. Vous ne me croyez pas, peut-être. Vous êtes sans doute, Monsieur, le fils de votre siècle et vous pensez de la vie humaine ce que nous en lisons dans les livres, où vous la voyez reflétée dans les miroirs d'une science qui la défigure. Mais la réalité n'est pas là. La vraie vie de l'homme, la vie qui est vécue dans les profondeurs de l'âme, a une autre histoire, d'autres expériences.' ”

George Marsh closed the book and waited for me to speak. “ What are you thinking ? ” he asked.

“ Ask me that when you have finished the story. Give me the rest of M. Marcel's narrative.”

“ Cyprien Saint-Albert, continued M. Marcel, was a man of the highest courage, and, from the first, of a morality absolutely pure. ‘ We are not of the Decadents, Monsieur ; I swear to you, the Saint-Alberts are not of the decadents, ’ he added, with great emphasis.

“ At the age of twenty-five his brother had risen to the rank of Captain ; and;

during the Crimean campaign, his courage in the field had been such as to win the personal approbation of the Emperor. All but fatally wounded at the Tchernaya on 16th August 1855, he had been detained for many months in hospital. Recovering at length, he made a tour in Egypt and Syria, and returned to Constantinople shortly after the conclusion of peace.

“Here Cyprien made the acquaintance of an English officer named Gair, who, like himself, had received a dangerous wound, involving some kind of injury to the base of the brain. After long hovering between life and death Captain Gair had attained convalescence, and was now waiting until suitable arrangements could be made for some companion to take care of him during the voyage home. Cyprien Saint-Albert—‘ever a man of the warmest heart’—at once volunteered to undertake the charge as far as Marseilles; and promised that if the invalid was not sufficiently recovered on arriving at that port, he would complete the rest of the journey and not leave the Englishman till he had reached his own doors. A warm friendship had grown up between the two men.

“Shortly before leaving Constantinople, Cyprien Saint-Albert, whose kit was exhausted, purchased from a Jew a quantity of clothing which he had subsequent reason to believe had been stolen from the British hospital-stores.

“During the voyage, Captain Gair’s recovery proceeded apace. The fits of depression and melancholia, which resulted from the nature of his wound, ceased, and hopes were entertained that when the vessel reached Marseilles he would be able to proceed alone. But during a stoppage at some intermediate port Gair had a slight accident. Going ashore in the dark his foot slipped, and, in falling, his head struck one of the mooring-posts on the wharf. A relapse followed, the melancholia returned, and for the next two days Saint-Albert seldom left the side of his friend.

“On the third day there was an improvement, and towards evening Gair got up from his berth and the two men spent some hours smoking and playing cards in the main cabin.

“The night was cold, and, on concluding one of their games, Saint-Albert offered to fetch a greatcoat for his friend, saying

that he himself would also put on some extra clothing.

“Going to his cabin, he took out from the bundle he had bought from the Jew a garment, which I gathered from M. Marcel’s description was either a knitted jersey or a Cardigan vest. As he drew the garment on he became aware of something stiff between the double thickness of which it was composed, and on examination, found that this was a letter enclosed in an envelope.

“Cyprien Saint-Albert opened the letter, read its contents, and laughed. ‘What he read there,’ said M. Marcel, ‘was never known save to the writer, to my brother, to John Gair, and to God. Il y avait quelque chose de dangereux, sans doute. The letter lies at this moment on the heart of Cyprien, placed there by me on the day of his burial, according to the directions of his will. His tomb is in the nave of the Cathedral.’

“Cyprien Saint-Albert read the letter and laughed, and his first thought was, ‘Here is something to amuse John Gair.’ Without further consideration he ran back to the main cabin and cried, ‘Voilà, mon ami. Read this, and boast no more of the reticence



of your English girls.' And he thrust the paper into the hands of Gair.

"Gair took the paper, placed it under the cabin lamp, and read. He then handed it back to Saint-Albert and, without saying one word, walked out.

"Uneasy in mind, Saint-Albert sat down and waited. Half an hour elapsed; then a sudden apprehension seized him; and he rushed out of the cabin to look for his friend. Entering the state-room which the two officers occupied together, his glance fell at once on a scrap of paper; on which these words were scribbled in pencil—

"'I have been expecting this—or something like it—all day. Go to Helen Ramsden as she bids you. Take all you can get. And then tell her that John Gair is at the bottom of the sea.'

"When Cyprien Saint-Albert read the words 'Helen Ramsden,' the terrible truth of what he had done instantly flashed upon his mind. At the moment when the impulse first seized him to show Gair the letter he had found in his jersey he had scarcely noted the name written at the foot. Now he remembered that Helen Ramsden was the name of the girl of whom Gair had often

spoken as awaiting his return to England. 'My God!' he cried; and fell in a swoon.

“‘Rightly or wrongly,’ continued M. Marcel, ‘my brother resolved to divulge nothing of what he knew. In so deciding, he was actuated by no fear of the consequences to himself. His motive was to save Helen Ramsden from all knowledge of the part her own folly had played in contributing to her lover’s death. As for me, I believe he was wholly in the right. It would have been better for all concerned had Cyprien been able to maintain his secrecy to the last. But the matter weighed upon his conscience, and I have reason to believe that about a year after his return to France, but not before, he revealed the whole story under the seal of confession. Acting, as I must suppose, on the advice, which is always a command; of his confessor, he charged himself with the mission of revealing the true circumstances of the death of Gair to Helen Ramsden, and went to England for that purpose, without explanation either to his family or his friends.

“‘After a short absence my brother re-

turned, his health impaired, and his mind in great perturbation and distress. It was not until a year before his death that he imparted to me the knowledge of what I have narrated, and he then told me that he had found Helen Ramsden in 1856. Ever a man of profound reserve, he said little about that terrible interview; but he gave me to understand that by yielding to the advice of his confessor he had done no more than desolate the life of one of the most beautiful of God's creatures. I now know that my brother had himself become enamoured of Helen Ramsden; and from a letter found among his papers after his death I gather that a year after his visit to England he actually wrote a proposal of marriage. The reply, which I shall presently show you, was from Mrs Ramsden, and explained that her daughter had become a chronic invalid, and that the proposition was not to be entertained.

“ ‘It was shortly after the receipt of this letter that my brother abandoned his military career and entered the service of the Church. To his friends the change was not unintelligible, for Cyprien Saint-Albert was a faithful son of the Church. But to

this hour the true cause is known to none, save to you and to myself.

“ ‘The morsel of paper containing the dangerous words of Helen Ramsden was preserved by my brother. The directions in his will described its hiding-place, and ran as follows :—“ Let this morsel of blue paper be laid upon my breast beneath the crucifix. It was the means of turning me to the service of God. But let its contents be unread.’ ”

“ ‘The tomb of my brother, as I have said, is in the nave of the Cathedral. He was buried with great pomp and amid universal mourning. The business of the city was suspended ; the shops were closed, and the procession which followed his bier was of the length of two miles. Being too infirm to take my place among the mourners, I watched the immense cortège from a neighbouring window. The greatest of the land were there, including the heir to the monarchy of France. *Mais quant à moi,*’ added M. Marcel ; ‘ *je ne songeais qu’à ce morceau de papier sur la poitrine de mon frère.*’ ”

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My friend ceased, and, looking up to the heavens, I was aware that the night was far spent. Neither of us spoke. Presently he said " Good-night " ; and until the morning broke I was alone with the stars and the moaning of the sea.

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